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THE ART OF DESIGNING THE ORIGIN
AND FORM OF POETRY

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FOREWORD

This little treatise does not aim to create poets—Heaven must do that; but it does seek to furnish those who have poetic inspirations with the knowledge of how to master the forms of expression. Poetry is first a gift, then an art—both the gift and the art demand cultivation.

Why is he honor'd with a poet's name,
Who neither knows, nor would observe a rule;
And chooses to be ignorant and proud,
Rather than own his ignorance, and learn?

* * *

Unpolished verses pass with many men,
And Rome is too indulgent in that point;
But then, to write at a loose rambling rate,
In hope the world will wink at all our faults,
Is such a rash, ill-grounded confidence
As men may pardon, but will never praise.
Consider well the Greek originals,
Read them by day, and think of them by night.

So advised Horace in his "Ars Poetica," and so would every accomplished poet advise today. Industry is not a substitute for inspiration, but it is an admirable assistant.

It is hoped particularly that young writers may take

pains to follow the exercises appended to nearly every chapter. The constant practice of verse-making by those who covet a mastery of form cannot be too highly commended. A thousand pitfalls are here pointed out whose deeps yawn for the unwary; a thousand interesting paths are charted for those who abhor monotony. Only let the versifier make himself master of a harmonious rhythm, an easy style, correct metrical form, and a wide variety of stanzas, and even though no high gifts are his he may hope to produce pleasing verse.

But let him not enchain himself with a multitude of rules. A knowledge of the manifold means of expression must help and not hinder. "For the artist in verse," writes Sidney Lanier, "there is no law: the perception and love of beauty constitute the whole outfit; and what is herein set forth is to be taken merely as enlarging that perception and exalting that love." These words the authors desire in spirit to make their own.

Teachers, it is hoped, will find the simple and progressive arrangement of this book, its freedom from unexplained technicalities, and the abundant questions and exercises provided at the close of the several chapters, a sufficient promise of its usefulness as a class-room text, while those who adopt it for individual study may find those same qualities not without value.

The authors acknowledge gratefully the help given by Miss Louise R. Bull, Miss Marie R. Bunker, and Mr. Francis A. MacBeath, Jr., in reading and criticising the

manuscript of this volume; and the valuable assistance of Mr. Robert Thomas Hardy in reading the proof.

Thanks are also due the publishers, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., for courteous permission to use illustrative extracts from the poems of Longfellow, Bryant, Lowell, Holmes, Saxe, Phœbe Cary, and Bayard Taylor; J. B. Lippincott Co., publishers of *Lippincott's Magazine*, for the use of the poems and light verse by John Kendrick Bangs, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Carolyn Wells, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Chester Firkins, Walt Mason, McLandburg Wilson, Anne Warrington Witherup, La Touche Hancock, Harold Susman, Robert Thomas Hardy, Edmund F. Moberly, James H. Hubbard, Dudley Glass, Sam S. Stinson, Cecilia A. Loizeaux, Katharine Perry, L. C. Davis, Frederic Moxon, G. Mayo, T. C. McConnell, Charles C. Jones, Harry A. Rothrock, Charles H. La Tourette, J. G. Neumarker, Frank M. Bicknell, Augustus W. Breeden, Karl von Kraft, "C. H.," "J. B. E.," and "M. M. P. K.;" the Century Co., and Mrs. Helena de K. Gilder, for "Sonnet on the Sonnet," by Richard Watson Gilder; W. B. Conkey Co., and also the author, for "Old Rhythm and Rhyme," from "Picked Poems," by Ella Wheeler Wilcox; the publishers of *Puck*, as well as the author, for "In Mournful Numbers," by George B. Morewood; Forbes & Co., publishers, for Ben King's parody on "The Bridge;" Small, Maynard & Co., for the poem "Fame," from Father John B. Tabb's volume, "Lyrics;" Miss Carolyn Wells for several excerpts from her anthologies,

elsewhere referred to, and for her "Limericks" and "Dithyramb to an Aëroplane;" Mr. Samuel Scoville, Jr., for his "Villanelle;" and Mr. Edward J. Wheeler, for his "Kitty."

THE AUTHORS.

PHILADELPHIA,
NOVEMBER 1, 1912.

NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION

In adding a chapter on "Vers Libre" it has seemed advisable not to disturb the original arrangement and paging of this book but to place it immediately following the appendix.

THE PUBLISHERS.

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF POETRY

Nature should lead the true poet by the hand, and he has far better things to do than to busy himself in counting the warts upon it, as Pope did. A cup of water from Hippocrene, tasting, as it must, of innocent pastoral sights and sounds, of the bleat of lambs, of the shadows of leaves and flowers that have leaned over it, of the rosy hands of children whose privilege it ever is to paddle in it, of the low words of lovers who have walked by its side in the moonlight, of the tears of the poor Hagars of the world who have drunk from it, would choke a satirist. His thoughts of the country must have a savor of Jack Ketch, and see no beauty but in a hemp-field. Poetry is something to make us wiser and better, by continually revealing those types of beauty and truth which God has set in all men's souls; not by picking out the petty faults of our neighbors to make a mock of.

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets*.

Since time-out-of-mind, critics have disputed over the problem, *What is poetry?* and even today no formal definition is widely accepted. Indeed, it is likely that we shall never have a precise and comprehensive *positive* definition, because so imaginative a subject must always be viewed imaginatively, and that is as much as to say that varied minds at different periods will view poetry variously. Besides, as Hammerton observes with regard to pictorial art, the affections often disturb the balance of judgment, and what an individual loves in poetry is likely to seem to

him greatest. Perhaps this is especially true with regard to definitions essayed by poets themselves.

But there is a deeper reason than either of these why poetry evades exact limitations: precise matters, for instance those which obey the laws of weight and bulk and shape, invite definition, while those which deal with emotions, and ideals, and fantasies, constantly present new appearances and defy rigid formulas. And so the category of difficulties might be lengthened.

Many things, however, we may say definitely regarding the nature of poetry. We know, for instance, pretty well what it is not, and we also know positively what qualities characterize most generally those expressions which by universal assent are called poetry. By this means we shall attempt to arrive at a somewhat elastic working theory of this inspired art.

Thinkers of all ages have bequeathed to us many illuminating utterances regarding poetry. While these now and then have the precise form of definition, they were rarely intended to be such, but rather were designed to emphasize some of its primary qualities as they appeared to their originators. Furthermore, these expressions were often supplemented by other descriptive statements—rather literary than definitive—which will serve as side-lights.

A comparative examination of such definitions and descriptions as those above referred to gives us on the one hand an informing consensus of opinions by experts, while on the other we go directly to the poems of great poets for examples of the theories illustrated. Thus by comparison, contrast, and elimination, we have a residue of definition

touching poetry as a thing produced—and not of that intangible essence, the *spirit* of poetry—which may serve as a working basis for our study.

1. Poetry Defined

Let us now quote, without discussing, several of the more satisfactory definitions of poetry, reserving for later reference a larger group of descriptive phrases—less complete, though often more brilliant than the definitions.

Poetry is “imaginative metrical discourse; or, more explicitly, . . . the art of representing human experiences, in so far as they are of lasting or universal interest, in metrical language, usually with chief reference to the emotions and by means of the imagination.”—R. M. ALDEN, *Introduction to Poetry*.

“Poetry is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity.”—LEIGH HUNT, *What is Poetry?*

“Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight of the human soul.”—E. C. STEDMAN, *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*.

“By poetry I mean the art of producing pleasure by the just expression of imaginative thought and feeling in metrical language.”—W. J. COURTHOPE, *The Liberal Movement in English Literature*.

"Poetry is a particular form of art working in the material of language, and we have defined it as patterned language. If the technical art of poetry consists in making patterns out of language, the substantial and vital function of poetry will be analogous; it will be to make patterns out of life. And this is the case. This is what poetry has been doing from its earliest days and is doing still."—J. W. MACKAIL, *Lectures on Poetry*.

To add another to these may be temerity, yet for the further development of these studies such an attempt seems needful.

Poetry is the rhythmical expression of emotional thought, interpreting life in language lofty, beautiful, and imaginative, and uttered for both delight and instruction.

2. The Ten Elements of Poetry

In weighing a definition, it must be remembered that not all great poems are great in every passage. Some rise to greatness by reason of general effect, while others are supreme in particular passages only. Really, this observation applies equally to all works of inspired art. Hence, to apply rigidly the foregoing working definition, or any definition, to all parts of all great poems would be destructive, and much more so to insist upon it in its entirety when measuring minor poems. Yet in greater or lesser degree each of the ten elements contained in our definition will be present in every great poem, and in proportion as these elements harmoniously exist in any literary work will it

rise in the scale of poetry. Omit one, and the poem suffers, though it may still be a poem, and even a fine poem.

(a) *Thought* is the basis of all literary expression, but in the deepest sense it must characterize poetry. Thought precedes feeling and reflection and artistic expression, and unless a unified thought be the germ of the poem, no poem can there be at all. No critic was more clear in the enforcement of this truth than was Coleridge.

Just how "big" must be the thought to warrant its use as the basis for a poem cannot be stated in clear terms. Two considerations, however, are fundamental: the thought should be either of permanent or of universal interest. Kipling's "Recessional" may not rise to thought-permanency, but as an occasional poem it certainly achieves universality of interest. The converse is true of Shelley's "The Skylark"—what it lacks in wide appeal it makes up in depth, and hence in permanency. Other poems—greater ones, it goes without saying—possess both thought-permanency and thought-universality, like Byron's apostrophe to the ocean in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage."

Thought, then, is the basis of poetry even when its lighter phases are the more appealing and apparent, for poetic thought is not the thought of physical science, of logic, or of metaphysics. It may touch any of these formal subjects, but only to transmute it into beauty and feeling.

(b) *Emotion*. During the reign of romanticism, when Byron was the cynosure, emotion was not only regarded as a *sine qua non* of poetry, but extremists like Moore

declared that "poetry ought only to be employed as an interpreter of feeling," and Byron sang of "poetry, which is but passion." Even the philosopher Mill described poetry as "the delineation of the emotions." The present-day view is more moderate, as expressed by Theodore Watts-Dunton, in his article on *Poetry* in the "Encyclopedia Britannica": "No literary expression can, properly speaking, be called poetry that is not in a certain deep sense emotional."

This last view is both conservative and sound. The "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," to use Wordsworth's notable characterization, "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." Reflect upon this great dictum and see how true it is! Subject great poems like Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal" to this test, and they meet it perfectly. Thought and feeling rethought and refelt give rise to a surge of poetic emotion which overflows in poetry—and that in turn mingles with the floods of feeling in him to whom the poem comes. "Evangeline" as truly arouses our emotions as it was born of emotion in the heart of Longfellow; conversely, there is nothing more pitiable than a pumped-up fountain of sham poetic feeling, for the stream can rise no higher than its emotional source. To feel rightly and deeply and sincerely is given only to genuine souls.

(c) *Interpretation* is the poet's peculiar gift. The Greeks, it has been often said, gave the poet his name, *poietae*, "a maker, a creator;" and the Romans called him *vates*, "a seer," one whose sight was in and out and around

and beyond; while the Germans made the name *Dichter*, a poet, from *dichten*, "to forge, to compose, to invent, or to muse."

Here in the word itself we have imbedded the central idea. The poet sees what is beyond the ken of those who are not see-ers by nature and constant habit. "Emphatically it may be said of the poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after,' " wrote Wordsworth¹, and Emerson declared that "Poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of the thing;"² while Carrière is quoted by Dr. Gummere³ as thus phrasing much the same idea: "Poetry speaks out the thought that lies in things."

To interpret is to stand between and make the utterance of one clear to the hearing of another. So does the poet stand, having sensed the sweetness and light and music and strength and seriousness of all hidden meanings in man and nature and God, and by voicing them in articulate manner brings that to our understanding which else were unknown. This is what Matthew Arnold meant when in phrase somewhat severe-sounding he said that poetry is "a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and beauty;"⁴ and Shelley had the same thought when he wrote that "to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful."⁵ As the seer sees truly, as his eye is sensitive to the beautiful, he is

¹ Introduction to "Lyrical Ballads."

² "Poetry and Imagination."

³ "Handbook of Poetics."

⁴ "The Study of Poetry."

⁵ "A Defense of Poetry."

occupy the choice seat in the Interpreter's House. fitted to occur before, with men groping among material Today as never before, for they know not what, today with its things, seeking cries for relief from oppressions, the poet is unrest and its ruth and interpret the meanings of life to us needed to see

all.

Imagination is a fourth element of poetry. Leigh

(d) *Imagining* the question "What is Poetry?" in his Hunt, answered, gives a category of six aspects of imagination so that whole treatises have been written without exhaustion, and scope. But chiefly we understand it to be the exhausting its stirring images, and this is the poet's vocation. faculty of forming once said that poetry was the art of "calling Samuel Johnson to the help of reason," and Blair, upon the imaginative foundations all nineteenth-century critics whose rhetoric conceived poetry to be "the language of passion have built, named imagination," while Shelley saw it to be or of enlivened sense . . . the expression of the imagination "in a general sense."

The earliest critic whose work is read today is Aristotle.

"Poetry," he wrote in his *Poetics*, "is imitation, or an imitative art." In this view Francis Bacon shared. "Poesie," said he also, "filleth the imagination." So by imitation these great minds doubtless meant imagery, "the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination."¹

The language of poetry is "vitally metaphorical;"² by it poetry institutes noble and striking comparisons, sends

¹ Macaulay, "Essay on Milton."

² Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry."

out the eye of the soul into the world of things seen and unseen, establishes points of contact for our understandings, conceives—that is, gives birth to—thoughts and emotions which it in turn interprets to men. “I saw the heart of man,” it says, “and it is like unto this.” In a word, the poet’s imitative imagery, untrammelled by laws and statutes, sees visions and dreams dreams which are more just than justice and more true than science.

Sidney Lanier has beautifully expressed the poet’s use of imagery when he says that a “harmonious union of soul and body, of spirit and nature, of essence and form, is promoted by the nature-metaphor, which reveals with wonderful force how these two, united from of old, still have new points of sweet and thrilling contact, and still adorn and complement each other. Spirit needs form, and finds it in nature, which is formal; nature needs life, and finds it in spirit, which is life-giving. Never be these two sundered! Forever may the nature-metaphor stand a mild priest, and marry them, and marry them, and marry them again, and loose them to the free air as mated doves that nestle and build and bring forth mildnesses and meeknesses and Christ-loves in men’s hearts!”¹

(e) *Utterance* is a further element of poetry. As Stedman put it, poetry is “vocal.” Human speech is its natural exponent, words form its music. Some one has said that poetry is “the beautiful representation of the beautiful, given in words.” What is thought and felt and discerned and imaged must be translated into language. Many

¹ “Music and Poetry.”

there are who feel but cannot sing, while more live in songs sung by other voices. For both of these the poet has a ministry: to him it is given to utter the unuttered—to express life. Go to your favorite poet, and you will find that he is *speaking* to you, *singing* to you—even uttering for you your inmost self.

(f) *Rhythm* is the sign manual of poetry's outward form. Shelley in his "Defense of Poetry" has admirably phrased this need for a patterned, recurrent form:

"Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thoughts. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order."

Rhythm is sensed from nature. Sound and movement and regularity of succession produce harmony, under the best conditions, and harmony is the suitable dress of poetry. "Musical thought" is how Carlyle denominated it.

On this question opinions have varied decidedly. Sir Philip Sidney, in his "Apologie for Poetrie," asserted that verse was not essential to poetry, while so scientific a modern as Hegel insisted that "meter is the first and only condition absolutely demanded by poetry." Between these amazing extremes stood the oft-quoted Shelley, who believed that poetry must be rhythmical, though not neces-

sarily metrical—a position which seems to us to be correct. More than the harmonious, vibrating sequence of beautiful sounds we may not demand as an essential, however we may admire and approve full metrical form. Archbishop Whately's dictum that poetry must employ "elegant, decorated language in meter" is true in most instances, but scarcely universal enough to be accepted as a law.

(g) *Beauty* is an element so well recognized as scarcely to need either demonstration or the confirmatory pronouncement of Poe: "I would define, in brief, the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty."¹ Here we have a fine suggestion that the beauty of poetry must consist not alone in the adornment of language, but in the presence of the ideal both in substance and in manner.

(h) *Loftiness*, or, in its highest expression, sublimity, has been recognized as an essential element of poetry ever since Plato spoke of it poetically as "the language of the gods." Ruskin's definition was by no means satisfying, but the one element of loftiness he enforced most effectively: Poetry is "the presentment, in musical form, to the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions."² The same high thought was in the mind of Alfred Austin when he expressed it as "a transfiguration of life." And of poetry Goethe says: "Like the air balloon, it lifts us, together with the ballast which is attached to us, into higher regions, and lets the confused labyrinths of the earth lie developed before us, as in a bird's-eye view."⁴

¹ "The Poetic Principle."

² "English Prosody."

³ "The Human Tragedy."

⁴ "Dichtung und Wahrheit."

(i) *Delight* is another quality of poetry which applies as well to him who sings because he loves to sing, as to him who is happy in his listening. Coleridge tells us that poetry proposes "for its immediate object pleasure and not truth."¹ Horace, however, says that poetry is "that which is intended for profit and delight."² Wordsworth believed that it was the business of the poet to give pleasure. "Nor," says he, "let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered a degradation of the poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe."³ And Landor writes that "all the imitative arts have delight for their principal object; the first of these is poetry."

(j) *Profit* is, finally, the unquestioned result, though rarely the purpose, of all true poetry. In this quaint phrase Sir Philip Sidney expressed his extreme view: "It is the fayning notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with that delightfull teaching which must be the right describing note to know a poet by." Horace said that "a poet should instruct, or please, or both."

Even those who perfectly agree with these classic authorities would scarcely say that all poetry is didactic, for the teaching we receive must be the by-product of truth, beauty, power, and emotion. Yet nothing humorous or serious of true poetic quality can come to perfect utterance but it leaves its profitable impress upon the hearer, for "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine" as truly as

¹ "Biographia Literaria."

² "Ars Poetica."

³ "Lyrical Ballads."

the thrusts of satire or the pangs of tragedy may teach us needed lessons. None the less, poetry is not *chiefly* "for profit."

The ten elements of poetry, then, would seem to be: Thought, Emotion, Interpretation, Imagination, Utterance, Rhythm, Beauty, Loftiness, Delight and Profit.

3. Poetry and Verse

In all the foregoing we have assumed a real distinction between true poetry and mere verse. Poetry is a spirit, verse is its outward form. Poetry is born, verse is made. Poetry is emotion, verse is gesture. Each has its standards, its limitations, its appreciators, and its uses; and—who shall tell?—those who today become skilled in the tricks of verse-making may use that skill tomorrow to utter some pure note of poetry. The whole range of creation spreads before the bard wherefrom to choose his materials. No theme is taboo. Touched by his magician's wand the commonplace is glorified, labor becomes kingly, tragedy emerges from the market-place, beauty breathes amidst the soot of the forge. Life is the poet's theme, and the poet's crown.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Pick out the elements of poetry according to each of the definitions by Alden, Hunt, Stedman, Courthope, and Mackail.
2. Do any of these definitions seem to you to lack any essential elements? If so, name the elements and

give your reasons for thinking they should be included in a full definition.

3. Criticise the present authors' definition.
4. Define emotion.
5. Name as many different functions of the imagination as you can. Illustrate.
6. Distinguish between imagination and fancy.
7. Select any long poem of distinction and point out evidences of each of the ten elements of poetry.
8. Make a list of the general subjects or themes treated in six poems of distinction.
9. Make a list of original themes which occur to you as being suitable for short poems. Remember that a theme for a poem may consist of a single idea.
10. Make a list of original themes suitable for long poems.
11. Select a so-called poem which you consider to be merely verse.
12. Give your reasons, and say if you think there is room in the world for mere verse.
13. Write a paragraph on the proper subject matter of poetry.
14. Make a short list of themes which you consider to be unsuitable for poetic treatment. Give reasons in each case.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF POETRY

Let learned Greece in any of her manifold sciences be able to show me one book before Musæus, Homer, and Hesiod, all three nothing else but poets. Nay, let any history be brought that can say any writers were there before them, if they were not men of the same skill, as Orpheus, Linus, and some others are named, who, having been the first of that country that made pens deliverers of their knowledge to their posterity, may justly challenge to be called their fathers in learning. For not only in time they had this priority—although in itself antiquity be venerable—but went before them as causes, to draw with their charming sweetness the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as Amphion was said to move stones with his poetry to build Thebes, and Orpheus to be listened to by beasts,—indeed stony and beastly people. So among the Romans were Livius Andronicus and Ennius; so in the Italian language the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccace, and Petrarch; so in our English were Gower and Chaucer, after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed to beautify our mother-tongue, as well in the same kind as in other arts.

—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, *An Apologie for Poetrie*.

The history of poetry is the history of civilization. For this reason, an inquiry into the causes which, through successive ages, have directed the imaginations of poets into channels of metrical composition, would lead us very close to the springs of all art and all learning. But, more specifically—for the foregoing is too general a statement to

be illuminating historically—when we, more and more, press in toward the heart of poetic origins, we shall find that as poetry arose and took form in each land and moved from Orient to Occident, it was shaped and colored by the national genius of each successive country that at once contributed to its rise and progress and received the benignant heritage which genuine poetry confers upon any people that fosters its indwelling. This, then, indicates the thesis of this necessarily brief and summarial account.

Though the precise origins of poetry are shrouded in prehistoric mist, we may be tolerably certain that just as soon as human utterance began to be amplified and made more effective by the addition of images, poetry was born. Its use among primitive peoples today is a fair indication of its first functions—that of communal or group expression. Afterward came the development of the individual poet with his increasingly personal expression, culminating in the lyrical form.

1. The Origin of Poetry

It is easy to picture a wild tribe dancing about its fetich and chanting some crude rhythmical sentences in honor of the god, in triumph over an enemy, in prayer for help, in mourning for some poignant loss. As these metrical and musical words were often repeated, they took on fixed forms, and so the rude tribal ritual was composed, and crystallized into a folk form. Naturally enough, tradition ascribed the gift of these poems to the gods themselves.

Such was the origin of the primeval ballad, and the epic poem whose finished verses, ages later, were recited in

market-place and camp, in palace and in garden, wherever the Greek tongue brought the civilization of that broad colonizing nation. And quite in the same way the poetic tales, epics, and sagas of East and North developed also. Presently, the poet, who had secured his training by compiling and arranging the heroic poems which were the property of his entire nation, began to invent story-poems and recite them for public entertainment—as well as for his own private gain. From this it was only a short step to the creation of poems expressive of the singer's personal aspirations—and so the lyric was engendered. Thus music and dancing and poetry share a common ancestry, and that ancestry a mingling of religion, war, and community life.

Just how deeply the poets of Asia—particularly those of India and Palestine—left their impress upon Greek life and character it is impossible to say, but certain definite marks are not wanting to prove that Asiatic conceptions of life, standards of conduct, and theistic beliefs influenced Greek ideals very potently. But which land was the earliest in coming to national poetic expression, no one has yet conclusively demonstrated.

Everywhere music, dancing, poetry, and oratory have preceded prose in what may be termed the artistic development of a people, and undeveloped races today are interesting examples of the persistence of this same order of growth.

2. The Spread of Poetry as Art

The almost coincident rise of the Greek epic and the Hebrew national poetry marked the definite genesis of the

literatures of these emotional peoples. And both laid their impress upon that newer nation whose conquering heel they felt—Rome. Next, as Roman domination carried her customs and learning to the provinces, the savage poetry of subjugated races was modified, and what we may call classical standards appeared in the remoter lands. And successively in France, England, Spain, Germany, and throughout all Europe, this process was worked out, just as centuries later the Revival of Learning carried classical standards to the ultimate parts of the earth.

But if the growth of poetic expression in all lands has been from the communal to the personal—that is, from the crude ritualistic and warlike and hunting chant through legendary, epic, and dramatic poetry, down to the milder and entirely individualistic lyric—the subject matter and the ethical ideals of poetry have undergone a similar evolution.

Moral ideals reached a higher, because a more unselfish, plane much earlier in Judea than in Greece. But the austere Jew was ever a lonely and remote soul and kept his pure ideals much to himself; while the beauty-loving, joyous Greek diffused his life wherever he went. So it came about that when Rome conquered Judea, the Jew brought no large teaching to his subjugator, while when Greece felt the yoke, she subtly captured her captor in every conceivable form of life. Thus it was not until, centuries later, the religion of Jesus spread through the Empire that the Judaistic conceptions of morals began to touch cosmopolitan Rome. Thenceforward, European

poetry, in common with all artistic expression, began to exhibit moral impulse.

Greek poetry was true to our dictum—it mirrored Greek life. A refined sensuality, a delicate appreciation of the beautiful, a worshipful pursuit of joy, an exaltation of the body, a profound yet light-hearted stoicism—these were the Grecian tones. The early philosophy of Rome was much the same, though a deeper moral consciousness was there; but Rome eventually became pessimistic, and plunged into excesses, all the while calling her mad whirl Life. Even the infusion of Christianity did not avail to put lofty and heroic ideals into the moribund body—for this, the added element of the North was required with its hardihood and its vital, though pagan, religious mysticism.

3. Poetry Today

Thus the poetry of all these lands most clearly reflects their varying and climbing ethical standards, and nothing is more patent today than that our present age is mirrored as completely and as perfectly in its poetry as in any other of its varied forms of artistic expression. Every age has had its despairing prophets. Elijah repined in ignorance of the four thousand faithful ones; Edmund Spenser, in the very brightest dawn of English poetry, bewailed its deepening night; and plainly may be heard today the lament of those who see in the larger attention given to fiction, history, and science, the certain presage of disaster for poesy. But if the epic days are gone, because communal life is too self-conscious for its reproduction in heroic

verse, the poetic drama is pluming itself for higher flights, and the lyrical poem was never so vitally concerned with the problems and expressions of its age as it is today. Poetry is doubtless feeling the depressing damps of commercialism and noxious morals, but it is also inbreathing the higher airs of a dawning era of human brotherhood and love.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Why, in your opinion, has the earliest expression of every literature been marked by the rhythm and repetition characteristic of poetic form?
2. Briefly trace the progress of poetry geographically from east to west.
3. As they mirror various races and religions, name some of the differentiating characteristics of Asiatic, Greek, and Roman poetry.
4. What single influence has done most to raise the moral ideals of poetry?
5. Would you consider the communal chant of primitive races, with its many impromptu variations, proof that the poetic form of expression is inherent in mankind?
6. Can you associate this with any practises of children today?
7. Is oratory or prose the more closely related to poetry? Why?
8. Write about one hundred words upon the influence of the Revival of Learning on literature.

9. What is the present state of poetry (*a*) in America?
(*b*) In Great Britain?

10. Are present-day influences favorable or unfavorable to the advance of poetry? Give reasons supporting your answer.

CHAPTER III

THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

The spoken word in poetry has for its direct symbol the printed word. What is true of the one will, therefore, presumably be true of the other. And this is so. Language as uttered sounds does not of itself make poetry any more than the words on the printed page make poetry. Language is the accepted medium of expression for poetry, just as marble is for sculpture, or pigments and canvas are for painting; and without language, it is safe in general to say, there could be no poetry.

—H. R. FAIRCHILD, *The Making of Poetry*.

The word of the Poet by whom the deeps
of the world are stirr'd,
The music that robes it in language beneath
and beyond the word.

—TENNYSON, *The Wreck*.

Lest we begin by accepting the false notion that the function of words in poetry is confined to their meanings, let us at once assert the contrary. Succeeding chapters will show that verbal sounds, both apart from and combined with the sense, are most important factors in poetical and rhythmical expression. Just now, however, we must examine words especially with their meanings in mind, casting only a passing glance at their sounds apart from their intellectual content.

Poe asserted that words were sufficient to express any idea, and in this he was supported by distinguished authorities. But surely there are thoughts beyond the power of

any words even to connote—imaginings which picture “the light that never was, on sea or land,” the tree “which bare twelve manner of fruits,” golden streets which yet are crystal clear. True, such extra-natural conceptions seem to be hazy and unformed, but that is doubtless because the minds which envisioned them could not find words to set forth the complete concepts—language has not yet found wherewithal to embody thoughts which are beyond the dimensions of our everyday lives.

Nevertheless, the poet is confined to the use of words as a medium for his message, and when the three-fold power of collocated words is found at its highest, that is, when meaning, sound, and movement are balanced and blended, we have a well-nigh perfect instrument of expression.

1. The Choice of Words

Does the vocabulary of the poet differ from that of the prose writer? Yes, for it is both more extensive and more limited. And yet the beginner is the one who soonest turns to high-flown, “fancy” language, in the mistaken idea that poetry concerns itself with strutting and unusual words. Examine the quotations cited in this volume and make actual test of the kinds of words used by our great English poets, and the results may prove surprising. True, poetry is lofty, but not toploftical; it is high in thought, but high-sounding words cannot elevate a commonplace idea.

In the main, therefore, the vocabulary of a poet does not differ from that of a good prose writer. Different

types of poetry call for a choice of words in harmony with the thought expression, just as in oratory, in prose, and in everyday speech; and it is this nice adjustment of language to thought which forms the first and deepest basis for good poesy. The gentle movement of the pastoral poem will naturally flow on in smooth and unimpassioned words—likeliest those not too remote from common usage and understanding. Such we find in "The Folk-Mote by the River," a narrative poem by William Morris:

It was up in the morn we rose betimes
From the hall-floor hard by the row of limes.
It was but John the Red and I,
And we were brethren of Gregory;
And Gregory the Wright was one
Of the valiant men beneath the sun,
And what he bade us that we did,
For ne'er he kept his counsel hid.

Here the only word not used ordinarily in prose is *ne'er*. *Betimes*, *brethren* and *bade* are less commonly used words, but nevertheless quite prosaic. Even heroic poetry of the most impassioned type uses few words not found in good prose, as a careful examination will show.

In what, then, does the choice of words for poetic uses differ from that of prose? In two particulars: In poetry we find a considerable number of (a) *Suggestive Words*, that is, words which connote more than they ordinarily mean, picture words which evoke a whole scene or suggest a comparison without actually expressing it. Such words must

be used not too freely, lest the verse give an impression of over-ornamentation and consequent heaviness and artificiality. After all, Simplicity is the handmaiden of Beauty.

Expressions like *the embattled farmers*, *the multitudinous seas incarnadine*, *the vernal year*, and *should'ring billows*, are full of suggestive richness. Similarly, the use of suggestive substantives is much more frequent in poetry than in prose—*Erin* for Ireland, *sail* for vessel, and the like.

(b) *Variant Words* are also characteristic of poetry. Of these are the "solemn" forms of direct address—*thee*, *thy*, etc., and the formal *pourest*, *heareth*, and the like. Then, too, we find contractions such as *e'en*, *oft*, *starr'd*, *list*, *mount*, as distinguished from mere colloquial contractions like *don't* and *she'll*. Other important poetic variants are archaic, obsolete, and obsolescent words, such as *erst*, *idlesse*, and *thither*; and unusual possessive forms, such as *the law's delay*.

But even more important, though perhaps less frequent, than any of the foregoing variant types, are original and little-used compounds. Homer is so rich in these fresh word-pairs that we have come to term them Homeric Compounds. *Shields smooth, beautiful, brazen, well-hammered*, is one of his notable groupings, equalled only by his *laughter-loving Aphrodite*, and *far-darting Apollo*. Shakespeare was the supreme latter-time artist in this inventive realm, with his *always-wind-obeying deep*, and many another. Carlyle also has contributed many compounds which while first used in his prose have found their way later into the poetry of others—*fire-eyed Defiance*, *much-*

suffering man, and the *frost-bath of Poverty*, are good examples.

The constant expansion of our English tongue by new coinage, revival of archaic forms, and both adoptions and adaptations from foreign languages, is a fruitful field for the poet wherefrom to gather fresh words for his verses. Surely with so wide a variety for his choice he will wish to avoid words which are unalterably stamped as technical (*steam-gauge*), colloquial (*can't*), commonplace (*handkerchief*), or ridiculous (*humped*)—of course we are speaking now of poetry, and not of nonsense verse.

2. The Grouping of Words

But much more in the grouping of words than in their selection singly does poetry differ from prose.

(a) *Sentence forms* are often abbreviated and the rules of grammar in that particular abrogated, as *Never night like this*, in which the verb and the article are omitted. Inverted sentences are frequent, like *Hushed lay the sleeping earth*. But care must be used not to use inverted forms from mere caprice, as the tyro often does, thinking so to affect the poet's livery. The danger is that the occasional obscurity in great poets, which is the result of too great compression or too refined and remote suggestion, may be regarded as an essential of poetry rather than a defect, as it certainly is.

(b) *Freshness in word grouping* is no less important in the whole poetic line than it is in the making of apt compounds. Indeed, so precious is the space of every letter in

a perfect line of verse that compression and suggestive quality are the two prime factors of word arrangement. Each word should bear its full part in the line—each word should not only convey its own idea, but enhance its preceding and succeeding fellow, for an ideal line of poetry is not a chain of so many links, but a galaxy of mutually reflecting gems. How distressing, then, are those evident attempts at padding, like *her face so fair*, which disclose that a line needs to be filled out and not an idea wherewith to upholster it!

Consider the mutual shining of each word in these lines—consider the compressed and efficient power of every phase of the poet's choice and arrangement of his words:

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depths of clouds, that veil thy breast—
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, a while bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapory cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the earth!
Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent skies,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

—COLERIDGE, *Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni*.

In this example we have only a very few unusual words, yet such is their arrangement that they are surcharged with bigness. The whole stanza throbs with great emotions—the thoughts tower huge, not a single word or group of words but connotes the large spirit of the poem. The language is simple, yet it deals with vast spaces, unmeasured heights, and things uncontained by human limits. Here, then, is the secret of poetic language—words perfectly expressive of poetic thoughts.

In Coleridge's "Hymn" we see not only the choice of poetic words, the poetic grouping of those words, and the poetic use of common words, but we discern a third great element in the language of poetry:

3. Imagery

"The business of poetry," writes Macaulay, "is with images, and not with words." "Metaphors come of love rather than of thought," says Sidney Lanier. "They arise in the heart as vapors; they gather themselves in the brain as shapes; they then emerge from lip, from pen, from brush, from chisel, from violin, as full works, as creations, as art."

Here is true doctrine. Poetry can no more exist without imagery than can the poet sing without visions. The poetic soul in poetic mood sees nothing singly—all life comes to him in dualities, in complexities, and the inner relationships of life which are unseen by the crass eye are disclosed to him because he is a seer. His vocation is to discern and set forth the similitudes of things unseen; he

must, because it is in his heart to do so, reveal to the rest of us the spiritual, the high, the healing, the up-pointing likenesses of common things, so that we may know that the lowliest beings which tread the earth may have their communion in the heights. So, too, must he translate the meaning of the difficult, the remote, the forbidding, until it is an open language that the simple may read. He will be a seer of beautiful and truthful and inspiring images, therefore, or he will be no poet—no “maker,” as the poet is.

Now all this may sound sublimated and impracticable. Perhaps it is, for the poet is not first of all practical. But the artist uses not only tools but earthy pigments and cold marbles for his creations; and the poet uses words for his evocations. His imagery is, if not according to law, at least wrought in ways we have come to understand. The *spirit* of poetry we may not define, but its *manner* is more readily understood. We know that when the mind institutes a comparison and phrases it in words, the result is a figure—a turn—of speech, and the poetic mind will not be content to dream, to see, his comparisons, but will seek for words wherewith to embody them. This is what Edmund Clarence Stedman says¹:

“What I may call the constant, the *habitual*, imagination of a true poet is shown by his instinct for words,—those keys which all may clatter, and which yield their music to so few. He finds the inevitable word or phrase, unfound before, and it becomes classical in a moment. The power of words and the gift of their selection are un-

¹ “The Nature and Elements of Poetry,” p. 240.

comprehended by writers who have all trite and hackneyed phrases at the pen's end. The imagination begets original diction, suggestive epithets, verbs implying extended scenes and events, phrases which are a delight, and which, as we say, speak volumes, single notes which establish the dominant tone."

The practice of phrasing images with delicacy and precision is essential for good poetic expression, hence the importance of a working knowledge of at least the commonest figures of speech cannot be overestimated.

Some of the most frequently used figurative forms are appended, both in simple definition and example.

SIMILE: A formal comparison of unlike objects, employing such words of comparison as *like*, *as*, *like unto*, etc.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learnt to dance.

—POPE, *Essay on Criticism*.

The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*.

METAPHOR: An informal comparison of unlike objects by declaring or implying that one thing *is* another, without the use of comparing words.

Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven;
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Alla given,
To lift from earth our low desire.

—BYRON, *The Giaour*.

ANTITHESIS: A use of contrasts in thought and expression.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

—TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

METONYMY: The use of the name of one object when another is clearly implied—as the cause for the effect, or the reverse; the container for the thing contained; or the sign for the thing it stands for.

The bright death quivered at the victim's throat;
Touch'd; and I knew no more.

—TENNYSON, *A Dream of Fair Women*.

SYNECDOCHE: Closely akin to metonymy, synecdoche makes some important part of an object stand for the whole, or the whole for the part.

The gilded parapets were crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with eyes
Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.

—TENNYSON, *Pelleas and Etarre*.

APOSTROPHE: A turning aside to address the absent as though present, the dead as though living, the inanimate as though animate, etc.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean,—roll!

—BYRON, *Childe Harold*.

Lift up your heads, ye gates; and, ye everlasting portals,
Be ye lift up! Behold, the Worthies are there to receive
him,—

They who, in later days or in elder ages, ennobled
Britain's dear name.

—SOUTHEY, *A Vision of Judgment*.

VISION: Treating the absent or the distant as though present or within the vision.

I see the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,

* * *

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup—

I see his gray eyes twinkle yet

At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul

So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

—TENNYSON, *The Miller's Daughter*.

I see the foam about thy keel,
I hear the bell struck in the night,
I see the cabin window bright,
I see the sailor at the wheel.

—TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

PERSONIFICATION: Attributing the qualities of life to the inanimate.

Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
“Quell the Scot,” exclaims the Lance—
“Bear me to the heart of France,”
Is the longing of the Shield—
“Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where’er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory.”

—WORDSWORTH, *Brougham Castle*.

HYPERBOLE: Exaggeration for literary effect.

So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
Grew darker at their frown.

—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*.

IRONY: A form of satire in which a hidden meaning is suggested, either by declaring the opposite of what is felt to be the truth, or by hinting at a condition of affairs not creditable to the subject.

Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,
(For Brutus is an honorable man,
So are they all, all honorable men),

Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me;
 But Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And Brutus is an honorable man.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Julius Cæsar*.

EXCLAMATION: Exclamation for literary effect. The chief factor is the inverted sentence order.

How wonderful is Death,
 Death and his brother Sleep!

—SHELLEY, *Queen Mab*.

INTERROGATION: A question put not for information but for rhetorical effect.

Is it what we love, or how we love,
 That makes true good?

—GEORGE ELIOT, *The Spanish Gypsy*.

LITOTES: Making a statement by denying the reverse of it.

One of the few, the immortal names
 That were not born to die.

—HALLECK, *Marco Bozzaris*.

CHIASM: A reversal of poetic order in successive lines.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
 Our fears our hopes belied;
 We thought her dying when she slept,
 And sleeping when she died.

—HOOD, *The Death Bed*.

OXYMORON: Joining words which are contradictory when taken literally.

Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!

Dove-feathered raven! wolvis-ravens lamb!

A damned saint, an honorable villain!

—SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. In prose, try to *suggest* a poetic idea which words cannot fully express.
2. Examine about fifty lines of any well-known poem and note (a) the number of "poetic" words, (b) the number of common words.
3. See if you can find any words used in a standard poem which in your opinion do not belong in serious poetry, and suggest better words.
4. Give prose examples of your own making of all the figures of speech named on pages 31-32.
5. (a) What is a trite, or hackneyed, expression? (b) Illustrate. (c) Recast so as to improve.
6. Explain the advantages of a new expression over a hackneyed one.
7. What classes of words should a poet seldom use in his poetry?
8. By quoting, show how the language of true poetry may differ from that of nonsense verse.
9. Give at least three original examples of the following:
(a) Suggestive words. (b) Compounds of the Homeric type.

10. Take any ordinary poem and, without altering the rhymes, number of syllables in a line, and the location of accent, substitute other words, not with a view to "improving" the poem, but solely for the sake of enlarging your vocabulary.

11. Make a list of twenty-five common words and set opposite each a poetic synonym.

12. Invent—in prose—the freshest possible comparisons, using varied figurative forms, for (*a*) an ocean wave, (*b*) a baby's smile, (*c*) a soldier's frown, (*d*) a bird's song, —and at least six other things of your own choosing.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANALYSIS OF VERSE

Verse may be rhythmical; it may be merely alliterative; it may, like the French, depend wholly on the (quasi) regular recurrence of the rhyme; or, like the Hebrew, it may consist in the strangely fanciful device of repeating the same idea. It does not matter on what principle the law is based, so it be a law.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, *On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature*.

Trochee trips from long to short;
From long to long in solemn sort
Slow Spondee stalks, strong foot, yet ill able
Ever to come up with Dactyl trisyllable.
Iambics march from short to long;
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapæsts throng;
One syllable long with one short at each side
Amphibrachys hastes with a stately stride;
First and last being long, middle short, Amphimacer
Strikes his thundering hoofs like a proud high-bred racer.

—COLERIDGE.

The earliest poetry was born of music and dancing; and although we often forget this origin, sound and movement are still the two elements that govern verse. Somewhat more narrowly than Mr. Stevenson, we may therefore lay down this law: Verse must consist of a succession of pleasing—or at least peculiarly expressive—sounds, set in a pattern of rhythmic time. Hence the value of both sound and movement in their relations to verse will be fully developed as these studies progress.

1. The Relation of Spirit to Form

If you wish to turn your philosophy, or your patriotism, or your religion, into poetry, well and good, but the fact that your philosophy is deep, or your patriotism lofty, or your religion lovely, will not of necessity make your poetry so—the spirit must be clothed upon with body, and the body must be of form suitable for the appareling of so deep, lofty, and lovely a spirit. The highest poetic ideas, if clumsily expressed, can never take their place as poetry, for poetry is not only the spirit of the ideal, but it is the spirit of the ideal expressed suitably and effectively. This, then, is why we insist upon a knowledge, and even a mastery, of the *forms* of verse—those poetic ideas are most effective which are so clothed with language, and arranged in such verbal order, as to harmonize spirit and form perfectly. In technical language, good poetry consists of good poetic ideas couched in good verse—that is, arranged in a succession of pleasing syllables, and ordered in rhythmic sequence.

The expression “pleasing syllables” is used advisedly because the pleasure derived from poetry may in certain instances be independent of its meaning. At first this appears to be heresy, but it is true. For example, it is possible for a person with no knowledge of German to feel a distinct delight in reading Heine’s lyrics, and for another, ignorant of Greek, to enjoy a recitation from Homer or Sophocles. It is apparent, of course, that this is due to the musical nature of verse. Naturally, too, where the words are understood, and where the sound, meaning, and

rhythm enhance one another, the pleasure is highest; but when only the sonorous and rhythmical qualities of poetry are felt, the pleasure may be none the less really experienced. On the other hand, the pleasure derived from an imperfect apprehension of a poetic idea—as when it is but vaguely in the mind, badly expressed in sound and movement, or crudely recited—will be inferior to the enjoyment derived from the harmonious, sonorous, and rhythmical expression of a lofty poetic sentiment: in other words, from good poetry.

For the writing of successful verse, three things are necessary: an idea, emotion, and technical expression; and in good poetry these three are one. The two former are not always to be had for the asking, but technical expression may be studied and cultivated.

It is obvious that individuals vary greatly in their sensitiveness to the value of words and the sounds of words, just as one man may have an ear for music and another be unable to recognize an air after hearing it twenty times; or one person may readily distinguish delicate shades of color and another be color-blind. The poetic equipment should include a natural sense of language, but the average person may be made to recognize good word-grouping when it is pointed out; he may learn by analysis why it is good, and if he has interest and enthusiasm he will want to try to make something similar himself. Given poetic ideas and the emotions arising from them, there should be no excuse for the verse-writer's expressing these ideas badly, for that means either ignorance or laziness—or both. Therefore, having considered the nature of poetry as thought

and emotion, we are now to give attention to the means of its adequate expression.

2. Meter

Meter, or the form in which poetry is cast, means *measure*. Greek verse was measured by the number of foot-beats forwards and backwards in the dance. The *time* required for the rise and fall of one foot was very naturally called a *foot*. Since the poem was chanted or sung as an accompaniment to the dance—which, as we have seen, was generally an important element in primitive religious ceremonials—the syllables marked by the stress of the voice necessarily corresponded to the beat of the foot in marking time. The measures were named from the arrangement of long and short syllables. The *iambus* was a short, then a long syllable; the *trochee* a long, then a short syllable; the *anapæst* two short syllables, then a long one; the *dactyl* a long, then two short syllables. These, with other more complicated combinations, must be examined in detail later.

English poetry followed, in a ruder way, the same line of development as the Greek; it too was born of music and dancing, and arose, in dim Teutonic times, in the solemn chant which accompanied the march or dance in primitive religious rites. The rhyming games of children are a survival of the primitive instinct to associate foot-movements with chant or song.

When verse in England ceased to be a spontaneous singing, and the learned tried to reduce it to rule, they naturally attempted to apply the classical system of

measurement to English poetry. But at once they encountered a difficulty. The rules of Greek and Latin meters were based on the combination and contrast of long and short syllables, according to the length of time required to pronounce them. This quality of length we call

3. Quantity

A long syllable was counted as equal to two short ones, in the classics; but in English, there was no such rule. Although as a matter of fact all English syllables do not take quite the same length of time to pronounce—the syllables of *viol* for instance being shorter than those of *landmark*—it was not possible to base a system of meter on these differences. Poetry was already written, much of it was beautiful and noble, but when wise men tried to analyze it they found that the classical system of measurement would not fit. English meters, they found, were based, not on *quantity*, or length of syllables, but on *accent*, or stress upon certain syllables, somewhat corresponding to *beat* in musical measure.

4. Accent

All English words, they saw, could be resolved into syllables, strong or weak, accented or unaccented, rather than long or short. They therefore divided the lines of English poetry into feet, counting the English *strong* syllable as equal to the Greek *long* syllable, the English *weak* syllable as equal to the Greek *short* syllable, and adopted the old classic names, iambic, trochaic, anapæstic, dactylic, etc.,

to describe these measures, or succession of syllables according to accent.

Let us throw aside for the moment these two systems based on quantity and accent, and commence with what is apparently the simplest method of measuring verse—that of counting syllables.

Take the first stanza of a famous poem, which has been said to be absolutely perfect in word and workmanship, Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard."

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,	10
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,	10
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,	10
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.	10

If we count the syllables we shall see that there are ten in each line—all the lines are of exactly the same length. Is that the reason why the verse sounds so smooth and regular? It is one reason, but not the only one. Let us see if we can find another reason.

We know, of course, that all the lines in a poem need not be, like Gray's, of equal length. If we read the second stanza of another well-known poem, Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," we shall see that the first and third lines have eight syllables each, while the second and fourth lines number only seven syllables.

Life is real! Life is earnest!	8
And the grave is not its goal;	7
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,	8
Was not spoken of the soul.	7

This stanza also reads smoothly. We shall see, then, that our lines need not all be of equal length. Does the fact that these lines balance each other, alternating eight syllables, seven syllables, eight syllables, seven syllables, make the verse read smoothly? That also is one reason, but again not the only one.

Take the first stanza of this same poem of Longfellow's, and we see that the last line does not read quite smoothly:

Tell me not in mournful numbers,	8
Life is but an empty dream,	7
For the soul is dead that slumbers,	8
And things are not what they seem.	7

We find a certain awkwardness in this last line if we try to read it aloud in a rhythmical manner—that is, with regular succession of accents—because we have to pronounce the initial word “and” with more emphasis than the sense indicates. It would be possible to take this line and use it as the initial line of a nonsense stanza as follows:

And things are not what they seem,
And life is naught but a show,
And cats will eat up the cream,
And always it shall be so.

What has happened? The line is exactly the same but we read it very differently. The time-scheme is completely altered. Instead of saying, as in the Longfellow stanza,

And things are not what they seem,

we find ourselves saying,

And things are not what they seem.

We see, then, that in our simple method of measuring verse by the number of syllables, we must reckon with something else: that something is *accent*. To emphasize its importance we shall use the terms *accented* or *unaccented* syllables instead of *strong* or *weak* syllables.

Accent is also sometimes called *stress*, and sometimes *beat*. It is the emphasis which the voice involuntarily places on certain syllables when pronounced properly in the language to which they belong. To the regular recurrence of accent, half our pleasure in English verse is due. The place where the accent falls gives the *form* and also the *name* to our meter. Let us read again the first stanza of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" and mark the accents.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

We see that every other syllable is accented, beginning with the second. *The accent falls with absolute regularity.* This, then, is the reason that the verse sounds so smooth and regular. We have found the first great law governing English verse, *accent*.

Let us mark the accents in the second stanza of "A Psalm of Life."

Life is réal! Life is éarrest!
And the gráve is nó't its goál;
Dúst thou árt, to dúst retúrnést,
Wás nó't spóken óf the sóul.

We see that instead of falling on the second syllable, as in Gray's "Elegy," the accent in the "Psalm of Life" falls on the first syllable, which reverses the beat and changes the character of the verse. The accent, however, falls regularly, and so that the stanza reads smoothly.

The trouble with the line

And things áre nó't wát they séem,

is that to read it in harmony with the preceding lines, we have to put the accent on a syllable where it would not naturally fall in simple speech and according to the meaning.

We therefore see that we must reckon with two kinds of accent: verse-accent and word-accent, and that in English poetry the two should normally fall on the same syllable.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Give in your own words a definition of the metrical foot.
2. How does the foot in English verse differ from one in Greek or Latin meter?
3. Is it always necessary for a good writer to put the regular number of syllables in a line? Give reasons.
4. Quote one or more lines that contain less syllables

than their corresponding lines, and say whether in your opinion the poet omitted syllables purposely, and if so, why.

5. Write a stanza containing one or more words of unusual emphasis—as a threat, or a cry of fear—and experiment whether a pause (an omission in the regular meter) after the important word helps or mars the verse.

NOTE: The whole subject of Irregularities will be treated later.

6. Try to find one or more poetic lines which give a distinctly pleasurable sound independent of the sense.

7. Define (a) meter, (b) quantity, (c) accent.

8. Mark the accents on two *varying* stanzas from different poems.

9. Try to find an example in which the word-accent and the verse-accent are not identical—that is, do not fall on the same syllable.

10. Hand in a single short specimen of your own verse, marking any improvements or changes on the margin, or, if the poem is printed, on an accompanying sheet.

CHAPTER V

THE FOOT

The office of the poet as a teacher of the chorus demanded a practical knowledge of all that passed under the term "dancing," including steps, gestures, attitudes, and the various resources of rhythmical movement. . . . The very word *poet* in classical times often implies the two-fold character of poet and musician, and in later writers is sometimes used, like our *composer*, in a strictly limited reference to music.

—S. H. BUTCHER, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*.

We have said that Greek verse was originally measured by the time of the rise and fall of one foot-step forward and backward in the dance. The term *foot* therefore came to mean a *group of syllables* which could be uttered within the time of this foot-movement. At least one syllable of the group was *long*, corresponding to the *thesis*, or the setting down of the foot, and was placed in the verse where the *beat* came in the music. This formed accent, or stress, in the verse. The other syllable or syllables of the group was *short*, corresponding to the *arsis*, or the raising of the foot, and was less prominent, or unaccented. As English verse is not divided into long and short syllables, but into *accented* and *unaccented* syllables, the English *accented* syllable is considered to represent the Greek *long* syllable, and the English *unaccented* syllable is held to be equal to the Greek *short* syllable.

We have said that accent, which is the basis of this foot

division, gives both form and name to English meter. Let us see some of the forms and names.

1. The Iambus, or Iambic Foot

The cú | few tólls | the knéll | of párt | ing dáy, 10
 The lów | ing hérd | winds slów | ly o'er | the leá, 10
 The plów | man hóme | ward plóds | his weá | ry wáy, 10
 And leáves | the wórld | to dárk | ness ánd | to mé. 10

We see that each line of this stanza consists of a regular succession of alternating unaccented (or weak), and accented (or strong), syllables. These syllables fall naturally into groups of two, and each group we call a *foot*. The first syllable in each foot is unaccented, the second is accented.

If we turn to our glossary, we shall see that a foot consisting of two syllables, the first of which is unaccented (or weak), and the second accented (or strong), is called an *iambus*. Gray's "Elegy" is therefore written in *iambic* measure.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF IAMBIC MEASURE

Come líve | with mé | and bé | my love.

—MARLOWE, *The Passionate Shepherd*.

I díd | but dream. | I név | er knéw

What charms | our stérn | est séá | son wóre.

—WHITTIER, *The Clear Vision*.

He ceased; | and Śa | tan stay'd | not to | reply. |

—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*.

Iambic measure (which may include any number of syllables from two to fourteen to the line) is the measure most congenial to the English language, because the native accent of our speech falls naturally into iambics. Hence, a very large proportion of English poetry is written in iambic measure, and this proportion includes both the simplest and the grandest poems in the language; it is equally suited to the simple measure of Wordsworth's "Lucy,"

She dwelt | alone | and few | could know |

When Lu | cy ceased | to be. |

and to the stately march of Milton's blank verse, an excerpt from which follows as the second example.

With head a while inclined,
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:
At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:—
"Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld;
Now, of my own accord, such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,
As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves he bowed;
As with the force of winds and waters pent

When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
 With horrible convulsion to and fro
 He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
 The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath.

—MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*

2. The Trochee, or Trochaic Foot

Life is | réal! | Life is | éarrest! |
 And the | gráve is | nó't its | goál;
 Dú'st thou | árt, to | dú'st re | túrnest,
 Wás not | spóken | óf the | sóul.

The foregoing selection falls naturally into groups of two syllables each, forming the feet into which we divide it. The first syllable is accented (or strong), the second is unaccented (or weak). Our glossary tells us that a foot of two syllables, the first accented, the second unaccented, is a *trochee*. "A Psalm of Life" is therefore in *trochaic* measure. (NOTE. The last foot of the second and of the fourth line drops one syllable from the usual number. A line which thus drops one syllable is called a *catalectic* line).

OTHER EXAMPLES OF TROCHAIC MEASURE

Gó where | glóry | waits thee |

—MOORE.

Read this | song of | Híá | wátha. |

—LONGFELLOW, *Hiawatha*.

There's a | lady, | an earl's | daughter, | she is | proud
and | she is | noble. |

—MRS. BROWNING, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*.

3. The Anapæst, or Anapæstic Foot

And the sheen | of their spears | was like stars | on the
sea. |

—BYRON, *The Destruction of Sennacharib*.

From the cen | tre all round | to the sea |

I am lord | of the fowl | and the brute.

—COWPER, *The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk*.

Of the four commonest forms of time-scheme, the third is the *anapæst*, which, as the foregoing examples illustrate, consists of two unaccented syllables followed by one which is accented.

4. The Dactyl, or Dactylic Foot

Cannon to | right of them,

Cannon to | left of them,

Cannon in | front of them.

—TENNYSON, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

One more un | fortunate, |
 Weary of | breath,
 Rashly im- | fortunate,
 Gone to her | death!
 Take her up | tenderly,
 Lift her with | care!
 Fashioned so | slenderly,
 Young, and so | fair!

—THOMAS HOOD, *The Bridge of Sighs*.

A *dactyl* is a foot of three syllables, the first syllable accented, the second and third syllables unaccented—just the reverse of the anapæst, as the trochee is the reverse of the iambus. (Some of the foregoing lines are catalectic.)

5. Scanning

To divide a line into its constituent feet, to mark the accented and unaccented syllables, to count the feet and name their character, is called *scanning*. As a Socratic illustration, and also to furnish some exercises which are especially needed before we take up the next section, let us scan the first line of "Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard":

The cur | few tolls | the knell | of part | ing day.

How does the accent fall?

An unaccented syllable is followed by an accented one.

What is the name of this measure?

Iambic.

How many feet are there in each line; not syllables, mind, but feet?

There are ten syllables, but only five feet. Our glossary tells us that a line of five feet is a pentameter. Gray's "Elegy," therefore, is written in iambic pentameter.

We have already seen that "A Psalm of Life" is written in trochaic measure.

How many feet in the first line?

In the second?

Find the name for each line by referring to the glossary.

What is a catalectic line?

What is the measure of the following line?

And his c^o | horts were gl^éam | ing with pur^u | ple and gold.

Anapæstic.

How many anapæstic feet in the line?

What then shall we call the line?

What is the character of the feet in the first line of "The Charge of the Light Brigade"?

Dactylic.

How many feet in the line?

Two.

What then shall we call the line?

Dactylic Dimeter.

6. The Law of Quantity in English Verse

We have seen that English verse is governed primarily

by accent; but quantity, or the law governing the time of certain syllables, must not be lightly dismissed.

How shall we read the following line from Wordsworth?

A vío | let bý | a mós | sy stóne.

This is four-foot iambic measure, and yet we have said that an iambic foot consists of two syllables. Shall we pronounce "violet" as "vi'let?" Surely not. We have said that the syllables of "viol" are really shorter than those of "landmark." We could not scan "A landmark low by a mossy stone" as four-foot iambic measure, but we can so scan, "A violet by a mossy stone," for the extra short syllable gives an effect akin to that of a grace note in music—that is, it is slipped in with a light touch, so to say. In the hands of a master, such irregularities add new and unsuspected beauties to meter, but a tyro should attempt them sparingly.¹

Another such device is the use of a *pause*. Take the following stanza from Tennyson:

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 Were crying and calling to her,
 Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
 One is come to woo her.

Here the *au* in "Maud" is a diphthong and may be said to be pronounced long, but are the five syllables of the third line really equal to the seven of the first? No, they are not, yet the lines balance. We find that the effect is

¹ See chapter on *Irregularities*.

produced by the instinctive pause after the word Maud,

Where is Maud—Maud—Maud?

and that these pauses serve to lengthen the line. Tennyson uses the same device in the well-known lines,

Break! Break! Break!

On thy cold gray stones, O sea!

Coleridge also uses it in the opening lines of "Christabel:"

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock;
Tu-whit! Tu-whoo!

We see, therefore, that additional short syllables are occasionally allowable, and that a long syllable followed by a pause may be used to lengthen a line. Such use of pauses does not, however, strictly correspond to quantity in the classical sense, though we may say that quantity occurs as a minor element in English verse.

In summing up we see that:

English verse is governed primarily by accent,
Verse-accent and word-accent should coincide,
Quantity is used as a minor element.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Scan (mark the accents and feet in) the following:

(a)

Maiden crowned with glossy blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,

Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating.

—GEORGE ELIOT, *Song from The Spanish Gypsy*.

(b)

As I sat sorrowing,
Love came and bade me sing
A joyous song and meet;
For see (said he) each thing
Is merry for the Spring,
And every bird doth greet
The break of blossoming,
That all the woodlands ring
Unto young hours' feet.

—JOHN PAYNE, *Spring Sadness*.

(c)

Loudly the sailors cheered
Svend of the Forkéd Beard.

—LONGFELLOW, *Saga of King Olaf*.

(d)

Come live with me and be my love.

—MARLOWE, *The Passionate Shepherd*.

(e)

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the night's Plutonian
shore.

—POE, *The Raven*.

(f)

I think of thee!—my thoughts do twine and bud
About thee, as wild vines about a tree,—
Put out broad leaves, and soon there's nought to see

Except the straggling green which hides the wood.

—MRS. BROWNING, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

(g)

I am monarch of all I survey,
Of my right there is none to dispute.

—COWPER, *The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk*.

2. (a) In what two ways might this single line from one of Shakespeare's sonnets be scanned?

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,

(b) Joined to its accompanying lines, how would you scan it?

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,

I summon up remembrance of things past,

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,

And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;

3. Write a line in iambic and one in trochaic meter.

4. Say which seems better suited for spirited expression.

5. Why is English verse most commonly written in the iambic form?

6. Name several poems, not mentioned in this chapter, that are iambic in movement, and several that are trochaic.

7. Name one or more in anapæstic form and one or more in dactylic form.

8. What is your understanding of the rule that "verse-accent and word-accent should coincide?"

9. Which form of meter seems to you best suited to the expression of serious thought?

10. What forms seem well adapted to expression in lighter vein?

11. How do you account for the fact that an irregularity in meter sometimes adds to the charm of a poetic line?

12. Point out several irregularities in the foregoing stanzas. Note that there is a difference between the introduction into a line of an odd foot and the mere omission of a foot or a part of a foot in order to effect a *pause*. This subject of irregularities receives fuller treatment later.

13. Write stanzas, *using the same foundation idea*, in each of the following foot-forms: (a) Iambic, (b) Trochaic, (c) Anapæstic, (d) Dactylic.

14. Which form seemed most natural to you? Why?

15. Select a form best suited to the spirit of your thought and write two stanzas, doing the best work of which you are capable. *Do not at this time allow yourself any variations or irregularities.*

CHAPTER VI

RHYTHM

Measured intervals of time are the basis of all verse, and their *regularity* marks off poetry from prose; so that time is thus the chief element in poetry, as it is in music and in dancing. From the idea of measuring these time-intervals, we derive the name metre; rhythm means pretty much the same thing,—“a flowing,” an even, measured motion. This rhythm is found everywhere in nature: the beat of the heart, the ebb and flow of the sea, the alternation of day and night. Rhythm is not artificial, not an invention; it lies at the heart of things, and in rhythm the noblest emotions find their noblest expression.

—FRANCIS B. GUMMERE, *Handbook of Poetics*.

In making our analysis of verse, we found that a line is made up of easily recognized groups of accented and unaccented syllables arranged in orderly succession, and that each of these groups is called a foot. We must now consider the relation of one foot to another, not alone in a single line but in a succession of lines.

A foot in verse may be said to correspond to a bar in music, and the regular recurrence of such feet or bars gives us *rhythm*. A knowledge of musical rhythm, however, is by no means necessary to an appreciation of rhythm in verse, for it is possible to have a delicate ear for poetic rhythm and yet to be ignorant of music.

Rhythm is the movement which we invariably hear and feel in poetry—the quality which poetry still shares with its parent arts of music and dancing. It is the most funda-

mental and important element of verse. We may have verse without rhyme but we cannot have verse without rhythm. Even Walt Whitman's poems have a rude and impressive rhythm, produced by a repetition of similar phrases, which will be felt when we read aloud the following from "Heroes."

I am an old artillerist. I tell of my fort's bombardment.

I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,

Again the attacking cannon, mortars,

Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

Whitman's rhythm is often as insistent as the aforesaid attacking cannon, or as the blows of a hammer on an anvil, and by means of it, in his best poems, he rouses our emotional excitement in much the same way that it is aroused, for instance, by the overture from "Tannhauser."

It is the rhythmic movement of verse which plays most directly upon the emotions. Even when the poetic ideas are not unusually arousing, a spirited rhythmic arrangement of words is sure to stir up feeling. It was the *rhythm* of the "Marseillaise" which roused the enthusiasm of the marching thousands who first sang it; it was the *rhythm* of the "Carmagnole" which excited its singers and dancers to the point of murder; it is the inarticulate rhythm of the war-drum that goads a savage tribe to frenzy. We are all more or less affected by the rhythm of recurrent sounds and movements in nature: by the surge and withdrawal of the waves on the beach, or by the moan of the wind in

the trees. We are stirred by artificial rhythmic sounds even when unaccompanied by words; we are excited by the clang of a fire-bell, and saddened by the tolling of a dirge. How much more appealing, then, is that verse which is compounded of high poetic ideas embodied in rhythmical form.

Rhythm, then, is governed by time and balance, and in English verse it is produced by a recurrence of accented syllables at regular intervals.

1. Regular Rhythm Unrhymed

Let us consider an example of regular rhythm in blank verse —the last few lines of Milton's "Paradise Lost."

The world was áll before them wêre to chòose
 Their place of rêst and Pròvidence their guìde.
 They, hánd in hánd, with wándering stéps and slòw,
 Through Éden tóok their solítary wáy.

We see that the rhythmic movement in these lines is produced by the recurrence of accented syllables at *regular intervals*, in other words by *time*. Milton's time-scheme gives us five beats to the line, and so insistent is this rule of time that in the third line the words "with wándering stéps," which contain five syllables, must count only two beats, and our extra syllable must be pronounced lightly, *giving*, as before noted, the effect of a grace-note in music.

We see that these lines are of the same length and balance each other. Rhythm is thus governed by time and balance.

2. Regular Rhythm Rhymed

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally,
 And sparkle out among the fern,
 To bicker down a valley.

—TENNYSON, *The Brook*.

In this selection we have four time-beats in the first line and four in the third. In the second line, we have only three time-beats, because the line drops a syllable. Is it therefore irregular? No, for it is exactly *balanced* by the fourth line, which also gives us three time-beats and lacks a syllable. The ear anticipates the form of the fourth line and recognizes it with something akin to delight.

Indeed, if the law of balance be observed, a line of irregular length or unusual time-beat may often be used with fine rhythmical effect, finding its echo in a similar line further along.

3. Unusual Rhythm Unrhymed

There they are, my fifty men and women
 Naming me the fifty poems finished!
 Take them, Love, the book and me together:
 Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

—BROWNING, *One Word More*.

This example, as may be seen, has ten syllables and five beats to the line, like the selection from "Paradise Lost," but the unusualness of the rhythm is caused by having the beat come on the first syllable instead of on the second; in other words, the lines are in *trochaic* meter instead of in *iambic* meter. We are so used to having blank verse written in iambic meter that when Browning reverses the beat it strikes us as something entirely fresh, and we at first think that he has added a syllable. But it is not so. Notwithstanding this apparent irregularity, Browning observes the law of time; his unusual beat falls with absolute regularity, and he observes the law of balance, too, the lines echoing one another.

Although it is possible to build up a rhythm by selecting a given number of time-beats, we must never forget that rhythm is the *inner impulse* of verse, its heart-throb, as it were, and that it should therefore be approached from the inside and not from the outside. The stronger this inner impulse the more vigorous and spirited will be the verse. For instance, take the following:

4. Unusual Rhythm Rhymed

Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward,
 Into the Valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

—TENNYSON, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

Tennyson said that this rhythm was suggested by the sound of a troop of galloping horse, and we naturally feel that movement to be the inner impulse, which, working in the poet's mind, determined the form of his poem; and the reaction of the poem on *our* minds reproduces that original impulse so perfectly that we hear the sound of the galloping troopers. Imitation of natural sounds and movements, and even of those that are mechanical, will reward careful study with suggestions of new rhythms.

There was never a priest to pray,
There was never a hand to toll
When they made me guard of the bay,
And moored me over the shoal.
I rock, I reel, and I roll—
My four great hammers ply—
Could I speak or be still at the Church's will?
("Shoal! 'Ware shoal!") Not I!

—KIPLING, *The Bell Buoy*.

The inner impulse of this rhythm is the surging up and down of the buoy, and it is emphasized by the recurrent refrain "Shoal! 'Ware Shoal!"

Kipling has a wonderful feeling for rhythm and may be profitably studied in this connection. Notice especially "Danny Deever," "Mandalay," and "The Ballad of East and West."

For they're done with Danny Dee'ver, you can 'ear
the quickstep play,
The régiment's in column, an' they're márchin' us
away;
Ho! the young recruits are shákin', an' they'll want
their beer today,
After hángin' Danny Dee'ver in the mórnin'.

—KIPLING, *Danny Dee'ver*.

In this selection we hear the sound of the regimental band and our feet almost instinctively keep time to it.

By the old Moulméin Pagóda, looking eastward to
the sea,
There's a Búrma girl a-settin', an' I know she thinks
o' me;
For the wind is in the pálm-trees, an' the témples-bells
they say:
"Come you back, you British sóldier; come you back
to Mándalay!"

Come you back to Mándalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:
Can't you hear their paddles chúnkin' from Rangóon
to Mándalay?

On the road to Mándalay,
 Where the flyin'-fishes play,
 An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China
 'crost the Bay!

—KIPLING, *Mandalay*.

Though we may never have heard temple bells, we recognize their rhythm in the foregoing refrain.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their
 hoofs drum up the dawn,
 The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare
 like a new-roused fawn.
 The dun he fell at a water-course — in a woeful heap
 fell he,
 And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled
 the rider free.

—KIPLING, *Ballad of East and West*.

These lines convey not only the romantic atmosphere of the race, but its killing speed; and the rhythm of the first half of the second line suggests even the faltering gait of the spent horse.

So essential is this inner impulse that it may even triumph over bad workmanship — a good rhythm will sometimes carry an inferior poem. If, then, rhythm be so important, the would-be versifier should cultivate a sense

of it. How may this be done? By noting the beat of any recurrent sound — the tick of a grandfather's clock, the beat of his own pulse, the throb of a steamer's engine. He should learn to feel the rhythm that goes with forward motion, the steady stride of a long tramp, the fall of hoofs in trot or gallop of a good horse under him, the thrust of arms and legs in swimming, the swing of the body in rowing. Not everyone can swim or ride, but nearly everyone can walk; and many good poets have been good walkers and have delighted in tramping out their measures. Keats did some of his best work after a walking-trip in Scotland; Tennyson kept pencil and paper in various nooks and crannies which he visited on his daily tramps; and Bayard Taylor's foot-journeys abroad brought him to a higher skill in both prose and verse.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Does pleasing rhythm seem to you to be more important in poetry than exact regularity of accent?
2. What objection is there to the constant use of an exact measure, free from "grace notes?"
3. Having the thought for a poem, would you deliberately select a meter so as to express it, or would you write some lines in the form that seemed most natural, and then make the later lines conform to them?
4. Does the movement of "Mandalay" appear to you to be slower than that of "Danny Deever?" If so, considering the equal quantity, how do you account for the difference?

5. Select passages from the poets which illustrate any three of the following: (a) galloping, (b) flowing water, (c) rough movement, (d) warlike action, (e) nobility of movement, (f) falling water, (g) sea waves, (h) the calm of night, (i) any other idea you have observed particularly well expressed by rhythm.

6. Criticise unfavorably any poem for its imperfect rhythm. Be brief and specific.

7. Criticise another poem favorably.

8. Reread page 62, then see if an application may be found on page 52.

9. Write two separate stanzas whose rhythm will illustrate any two of the ideas indicated in question 5. At this stage of your work, open imitation will help you.

10. Write a stanza in imitation of "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

11. Write a stanza in imitation of "Mandalay."

CHAPTER VII

RHYME

What'er you write of, pleasant or sublime,
Always let sense accompany your rime;
Falsely they seem each other to oppose,—
Rime must be made with reason's law to close;
And when to conquer her you band your force,
The mind will triumph in the noble course;
To reason's yoke she quickly will incline,
Which, far from hurting, renders her divine;
But if neglected, will as easily stray,
And master reason, which she should obey.

—NICOLAS BOILEAU, *L'Art Poétique*.

English poetry, in common with that of all modern languages, is usually rhymed. The unrhymed lyric—of which more later—is an exceptional form, while blank verse is sufficiently individual to stand out from the common custom. To it an entire chapter of this treatise has been devoted.

I. Rhyme Defined

Rhyme is the recurrence of closely similar sounds at the ends of corresponding lines of poetry, or in certain definite places within the lines. In somewhat more technical language, rhyme, as Professor Matthews observes in "A Study of Versification," is made by using the same vowel-sounds in the last long, or accented, syllable and in all the

syllables that follow it, "preceded by a difference in the consonant-sound that comes before this final long vowel." This law will be made clearer by illustration: *plant* and *slant* rhyme properly, as do *planted* and *slanted*, and *planting* and *slanting*.

2. Imperfect Rhymes

Plant and *implant* are not regarded as perfect rhymes, for the consonant sounds which precede the accented vowel-sound are identical and their use would not only betoken a poverty of invention but produce a feeble effect upon the ear. Some genuine poets have allowed themselves this license—Byron rhymes *philanthropic* with *misanthropic*, and Lowell couples *mentor* with *tormentor*, but it is better to follow the strict law.

For the foregoing reasons, words of similar sound but of different meaning, as *sight* and *site*, are not considered perfect rhymes in English poetry, although they are allowed and even much used in French verse.

The further rule that the final *accented* syllables and not merely the final syllables must rhyme also finds distinguished violators, but it is almost universally recognized that *naming* and *charming* do not rhyme—the accented vowels are identical, but they are not identical vowel-sounds, such as we have in *charming* and *harming*, which are therefore perfect rhymes. It should be remarked that these two words may appear to break the law requiring a different consonant-sound preceding the last accented vowel-sound, but *h* is an aspirate which breathes into the

a sound in *harming*, while *ch* gives the true consonant-sound. Sometimes the law requiring that rhymes be based on the last accented syllables is violated by coupling in rhyme such words as *rainbow* and *below*. In these words the accents do not fall on the syllables of similar sound and therefore they do not rhyme.

It may also be said in passing that not merely the final *accented* syllables but—if there be any—also all succeeding syllables of rhymed words must be of similar sound in order to effect a perfect rhyme. Thus, not only the accented syllables of *indelicate* and *indelible* rhyme, but the first three syllables are identical, yet the words do not approach a true rhyme because their final syllables vary in sound. But *untellable* and *indelible* do rhyme, perfectly; though the *a* and *i* are not identical vowels, their sounds in combination—*tellable*, *delible*—are sufficiently close to rhyme well. A trained ear is the best safeguard against the use of such false rhymes as *clime*, *shrine*, or *blundered*, *hundred*—though the latter pair was used by Tennyson in “The Charge of the Light Brigade”—not by mistake, of course, but doubtless because colloquially many do say *hunderd* and because there is no perfect rhyme for *hundred*, and he could not discard the word. The fact that great poets have been guilty of atrocious rhymes—and the instances are many—ought not to be quoted as an excuse for others.

Do not be misled by the *r* sound. *Dawn* and *morn* do not rhyme, nor do *broad* and *lord*, or *Eva* and *deceiver*.

Certain rhymes which once were legitimate can no longer be so considered. In Shakespeare’s day *conceit* and

weight rhymed and in the 18th century, *joy* rhymed with *high*. Owing to changes in pronunciation these are no longer admissible. *Wind*, however, is a word which in poetry keeps its old pronunciation; it is usually rhymed on the sound of *kind* and not on that of *sinned*.

3. Kinds of Rhyme

As might be inferred from the foregoing pages, there are various kinds of rhyme:

Masculine, or single, rhyme consists of a rhyme on one syllable only, as *day*, *pray*.

Feminine, or double, rhyme is a rhyme on two syllables, as *token*, *spoken*; so also *unbroken*, because the last two syllables rhyme in sound with *token* and are accented similarly, without any reference to the first syllable *un*.

Triple rhyme is a rhyme on three syllables, as *scornfully*, *mournfully*.

Masculine rhyme gives force, feminine usually gives lightness and grace, while triple is seldom employed except in humorous verse, although Hood uses it in one of his serious poems:

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care!
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

4. Location of Rhymes

By rhyme we usually mean *end-rhyme*, or the agreement in sound of the final words of the lines. End-rhyme was adopted in England after the Norman conquest and was imitated from the rhyming meters of the widely used Latin hymns. The simplest form of Latin hymn meter became the ordinary English ballad measure, which will be treated under *The Ballad*. The Normans in the reign of Henry II introduced the lyric poetry of Provence and Aquitaine into England, and although the people remained satisfied with simple ballad measure, the court and clerkly poets were much influenced by these new meters. In the 13th century they rhymed with grace and facility, as is shown by a few scraps of song which have come down to us, and by the beginning of the 14th century more complicated rhyme-schemes were used in England than were after attempted until we reach the recent imitations of French artificial meters, which also require a separate and later treatment.

The following example of graceful rhyme is the first stanza of a love lyric from one of the Harleian manuscripts. It is written in the Southern Saxon dialect and was evidently intended to be sung, for it has a refrain. In fact it almost sings itself.

Bytuené Mersh ant Averil,
 When spray beginneth to springe,
 The lutel foul hath hire wyl
 On hyre lud to synge.
 Ich libbe in love-longinge
 For symlokest of allé thinge;
 He may me blissé bringe;
 Icham in hire baundoun.
 An hendy hap ichabbe yhent;
 Ichot from hevene it is me sent;
 From allé wymmen mi love is lent
 Ant lyht on Alysoun.

In English poetry we are not confined to end-rhymes, but occasionally use other forms, such as *beginning-rhyme*, wherein the first syllable of each rhyming line rhymes. Although some authors treat beginning-rhyme as if it were the same as alliteration, there is really a decided difference—a mere examination of the two forms should show this. (See chapter on *Alliteration and Assonance*.)

The following specimen of beginning-rhyme is from Hood's "The Bridge of Sighs." Observe that end-rhyme is also used.

Mad from life's history,
 Glad to death's mystery.

So unusual a rhyme-scheme should be used charily for it is really only ornamental, and, indeed, it has been seldom adopted by poets of distinction.

Not content with end-rhyme and beginning-rhyme,

poets occasionally use *internal-rhyme*, generally using *end-rhyme* also. Some of the rhyme-schemes of the old Latin hymn writers, from which our English poets often took their patterns, were very complicated; for instance, that of "Jerusalem the Golden," by the French monk, Bernard of Cluny, who was Bernard de Morlas. The original, which he believed to be the direct result of inspiration, contains forty-three stanzas of unequal length, and is entitled "The Celestial Country." Another Latin poem was written in 1145 by the same Bernard. It contains three thousand lines and furnishes the most remarkable examples of both internal- and end-rhyme extant.

DE CONTEMPTU MUNDI

Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus
Ecce minaciter imminet arbiter ille supremus.
Imminet, imminet et mala terminet, aequa coronet,
Recta remuneret, anxia liberet, aethera donet,
Auferat aspera duraque pondera mentes onustae,
Sobria muniat, improba puniat, utraque juste.

A good example of internal-rhyme is Tennyson's "Sweet and Low," and a still finer one is the following lyric from "The Princess." No title is given by the poet himself.

BUGLE

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

Poe uses three-fold internal-rhyme in "The Raven:"

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no
token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word
"Lenore."

The same device is used with good effect in Alfred Percival Graves' "Father O'Flynn:

Powerfullest preacher and tindherest teacher,
And kindest creature in old Donegal.

Too plentiful a use of double-rhyme is apt to impair the dignity of a poem, which may thus degenerate into jig-time. The stateliest measures use single-rhyme.

5. Unusual Rhyme-Schemes

Unusual rhymes may sometimes be employed to add emphasis or to catch the attention. Browning delighted in fantastic rhymes. His reason may perhaps be found in this stanza:

Grand, rough old Martin Luther
Bloomed fables, flowers on furze,
The better, the uncouthier;
Do roses stick like burrs?

Thomas Love Peacock was one of the most dexterous of English rhymesters. The following opening stanza of one of his poems goes off like the clatter of musketry:

WAR-SONG OF DINAS VAWR

The mountain sheep are sweeter
 But the valley sheep are fatter;
 We therefore deemed it meet
 To carry off the latter.
 We made an expedition,
 We met an host and quell'd it,
 We forced a strong position
 And kill'd the men who held it.

We find many clever examples of unusual rhymes in humorous and satirical verse. Barham's "The Ingoldsby Legends" is a mine of such ingenious combinations; for instance:

Should it even set fire to the castle and burn it, you're
 Amply insured both for buildings and furniture.

Horace and James Smith's "Rejected Addresses" contain other examples, such as *chimney* and *slim knee*, which they used because the former word was said to have no rhyme in English. W. S. Gilbert's "Bab Ballads" as well as his opera librettos contain many effective rhymes. As an example of a "patter song," take this from "The Sorcerer:"

O what is the matter?
 O what is the clatter?
 He's glowering at her
 And threatens a blow!

O why does he batter
The girl he did flatter,
And why does the latter
Recoil from him so?

6. Special Cautions

Rhyming words should not be too widely separated, although occasionally a poet carries a rhyme from one stanza to another, as Keats does in the following:

IN A DREAR-NIGHTED DECEMBER

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy Tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north wind cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them,
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December
Too happy, happy Brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

The troubadours wrote stanzas consisting entirely of unrhymed lines, to which rhymes were found in the succeeding stanzas of the same poem, but our ears are not so highly educated, and decline to carry many sounds so far.

If you employ rhyme at all, study to do it properly. Never be content to leave an unrhymed line unless your meter requires it, as in simple English ballad meter, or the quatrains (four-line stanzas) of Omar Khayyám.

In writing stanzas with alternate rhymes, do not use the same vowel-sound in pairs of adjoining rhymes—for instance:

.....hope
stone
grope
alone

is a faulty rhyme-grouping because the rhymes are not identical, yet they are too similar to be well contrasted. It is almost as faulty to use as adjoining words those of generally similar sounds, as:

.....hid
led
rid
said

In rhyming it is permissible to use your best and most effective word last, but do not be satisfied with an imperfect rhyme. Always seek a perfect one that expresses your meaning. Remember, Dante said that words had never made him say what he did not want to say, but that he had often made them say what they did not want to say. Re-

vert to Boileau's counsel, which is prefixed to this chapter, and let all the scheme and variety of your rhymes be governed by your theme and your purpose. That which would be quite tolerable in nonsense verse would not serve for a dignified poem.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Which of the following groups are perfect rhymes: *cold, doled; might, mite; due, two; knighthood, right would; claim, lain; twined, wind; his train, his strain; scruple, pupil.*

2. Criticise any that may be imperfect, giving your reasons.

3. Would you feel free to use an imperfect rhyme if it appears in poetic masterpieces?

4. In what classes of poetry are internal-rhymes especially appropriate?

5. If you must keep in a poem a word requiring a rhyme, and the only rhyming word is unpoetic, or conveys not quite the desired shade of meaning, which rhyming word should precede the other?

6. In selecting rhymes for a poem, should one always strive for euphony?

7. When a rhyme does not readily suggest itself, how do you proceed to find the suitable word?

8. Write a stanza, rhyming words of several syllables.

9. Write another containing one or more internal rhymes in every line.

10. Write others in imitation of the stanza (a) on pages 72 and 73; (b) on page 66; (c) on page 77; (d) on page 42.

11. From poems in this volume, make a list of rhymed words which are no longer perfect on account of changing pronunciation.

12. Are all the rhymes in the following stanza suited to serious poetry? Why, or why not?

KITTY

Blue eyes so changeable,
 Hair so arrangeable,
 Twice is she never the same,
 Will so capricious is,
 Form so delicious is,
 Pulses of mine are aflame.

Doric simplicities,
 Attic felicities,
 In her trim figure unite.
 Sweetly they steal to me,
 Clearly reveal to me
 How disconcerting my plight.

Though I may sing to her,
 What could I bring to her?
 Only a heart in distress,
 Futile my verse it is,
 Empty my purse it is,
 Bondage, not bonds, I possess.

Art is so tenuous,
Life is so strenuous,
Love such an exquisite trance,
Shall I beware of her?
Or shall I dare for her,
Like the old knights of romance?
—EDWARD J. WHEELER, in the *International*.

13. Make a scrap-book or note-book collection of every type of rhyme you can gather.

14. Write a brief discussion of the suitability of some of these rhymes from the standpoint of the entire poem and of the individual passage.

15. Practise altering the rhyme words in well-known poems, then carefully study the effect on the thought, beauty, and general poetic qualities of the poem.

CHAPTER VIII

ASSONANCE AND ALLITERATION

All alliteration for the sake of alliteration is trifling.

—SIDNEY LANIER, *The Science of English Verse*.

1. Assonance

The literal meaning of the word *assonance* conveys a suggestion of its technical signification—sound placed with sound. It is vowel-rhyme, and in versification is used now and then as a substitute for regular-rhyme.

Assonance consists in the use of the same vowel-sound in the assonant words—combined, however, with non-asonant consonants. Theoretically, this method of sound-unity requires the use of the same vowels in the assonant words from each last accented vowel to the end of the word, *penitent, merited*, furnishing an unusually good example because all the vowels are the same—*e, i, e*—and only one consonant repeated—*t*. In practice, however, it is usually only the accented vowels which are identical, as *maiden, naiad*.

Assonance was the rhyme-system of some of the old Romance languages, and “Le Chanson de Roland” is in itself a famous example. This rhyme-scheme was a characteristic of the old Spanish ballads, and is still used in Spanish poetry.

George Eliot successfully imitated their usage in the following song from "The Spanish Gypsy:"

Maiden, crowned with glossy blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed *naiad*, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating—
Bright O bright Fedalma!

Assonance was also a feature of Celtic poetry, and survives as a spontaneous quality in some present-day Irish poems. For example, we find it freely used in Milliken's "The Groves of Blarney."

"The groves of Blarney, they look so charming," etc.

It is used by Francis Mahoney in "The Bells of Shandon:"

I've heard bells tolling
Old Adrian's Mole in,
Their thunder rolling
From the Vatican—
And cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turrets
Of Nôtre Dame.

Here *tolling* and *Mole in*, *can* and *Dame*, are not intended as imperfect rhymes but as assonance. It is also used in "The Town of Passage" by the same author:

The town of Passage
Is both large and spacious
And situated
Upon the say.

Examples of it may be found in many great poets. Lowell says that "Homer, like Dante and Shakespeare, like all who really command language, seems fond of playing with assonances." For the modern rhymster, its sparing use may add color and variety to his verse if employed within the line, but it had best be avoided in terminal words lest it be mistaken for imperfect end-rhyme.

2. Alliteration

Alliteration is another ancient system of verse-making which survives in English poetry merely as an ornament. It is the repetition of the same letter or sound at the beginning of two or more words or syllables in close or immediate succession.

In a somer seson when soft was the sonne,
I shope me in shroudes as I a shepe were.
—WILLIAM LANGLAND, *The Vision Concerning Piers the Plowman*.

Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, and Middle-English poems are practically all alliterative—in fact, considered as verse, their distinguishing characteristic is this type of sound-unity. In modern times, Wagner employed alliteration for his librettos instead of using end-rhymes, doubtless in

most instances to convey the early Germanic feeling as well as for purposes of vocalization. The composer maintained that, owing to the singer's need of dwelling on the vowel-sound, the terminal consonant and rhyme were lost, whereas the initial consonant could not be lost. He was probably also influenced by the fact that the old Teutonic poems from which he drew his material were all written in alliteration, and he therefore found the form ready-made to his hand.

Shakespeare used the scheme wherever it would beautify his verse.

To turn and *wind* a fiery Pegasus,
And *witch* the *world* with noble horsemanship.

—*Henry IV.*

And *deeper* than *did* ever plummet sound
I'll *drown* my book.

—*The Tempest.*

He also takes occasion in "Love's Labor's Lost" to ridicule the abuse of alliteration, where Holofernes, the schoolmaster, says, "I will something affect the letter; for it argues facility," and then he reads a poem beginning:

The preylful princess pierced and prick't a pretty
pleasing pricket,

which reminds us of the nursery example,

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Thus evidently, alliteration is the easiest of all verse ornaments, wherefore the amateur poet should be on his guard against its excessive use. Too much of it gives a slippery quality to the verse—the ear is pleased, but finally teased, by the recurring sound, and the mind lets the idea slide by inattentively. As Browning asks, “Do roses stick like burrs?”

But alliteration also has its merits, and Swinburne, a skillful poet, has used the device with beautiful effect, as:

*Before the beginning of years,
There came to the making of man.*

Sometimes, however, he adopts it less happily:

*The lilies and languors of virtue
The roses and raptures of vice.*

Here, we feel that the words were chosen mainly for the sake of their alliterative quality, and the mind unconsciously resents the fact; and really this charge of artificiality is the gravest reason against its frequent use. In other words, moderate alliteration intensifies the meaning, as in Kipling's “The Ballad of East and West:”

“You have taken the one from a foe,” said he,
“Will you take the mate from a friend?”

Upon the other hand, excessive alliteration weakens the meaning, as in the foregoing second Swinburne example, and gives a feeling of triviality—a sense of mere word jugglery.

The repetition of the same idea, or the same word or phrase, is a legitimate and often a more effective kind of verse-ornament than alliteration, and one much in use among primitive peoples. Note this translation of an old Russian song on the death of Ivan the Terrible:

It happened to us
In Holy Russia,
In stone-built Moscow
In the golden Kremlin,
They beat upon the great bell.

Some further reference to this subject will be found under the treatment of *The Ballad*.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. How does assonance differ from imperfect rhyme?
2. Give three original examples of assonance, using words of different vowel sounds.
3. Write a verse using as many assonant words as seems desirable.
4. Alter several of your former verses by the introduction of assonant words.
5. Discuss briefly the effect of too many assonant words in one poem.
6. What effect has alliteration upon a line, apart from its sound?
7. Turn a passage of figurative prose into simple alliterative verse.

8. Why should a poet guard against the too frequent use of alliteration?

9. Try to find examples (*a*) of its good use; (*b*) of its imperfect use.

10. (*a*) Write a quatrain containing as many alliterative words as possible. (*b*) Correct it by taking out all alliterative words, except those that are so well used that a change would mar the verse.

11. Do the same for a second stanza.

CHAPTER IX

ONOMATOPŒIA

SOUND AND MOVEMENT

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo of the sense.
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar;
When Ajax strives some rock's vast might to throw,
The line, too, labors, and the words move slow.
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.
—ALEXANDER POPE, *Essay on Criticism*.

1. Sound

Onomatopœia is the use of words expressive of natural sounds—it is fitting the sound to the meaning. Primitive man used imitative sounds to describe certain objects. The Indian name *Minnehaha*, Laughing Water, is a familiar illustration. The original roots of some of our common words arose in the effort of our remote ancestors to describe sound and motion. The word *horse*, for instance is *hrse*, or the sound made by a swiftly passing animal.

In English we have many words descriptive simply of sound, such as *buzz*, *hiss*, *murmur*, and *clang*. We have other words descriptive merely of motion, such as *hover* and *waver*. By descriptive, here, we mean that the sound of the word indicates the motion expressed.

We have still a third class of words descriptive of both sound and motion, such as *tramp*, *gallop* and *plunge*.

You see what a mine of rich materials such words are for the poet, and the masters of language have ever been quick to delve for and use them.

Let us now consider *gallop* as an example of a word which describes both sound and motion. This word does not trot; it gives us both the movement and the thud of the more spirited gait. *Canter* gives the same motion, but without the blow at the end.

Repeat aloud the word *plunge*. Do you not hear the sound of the fall of a heavy body in water, with its partial resurge to the surface?

Study the following line from Tennyson:

The white, cold, heavy-plunging foam.

—*A Dream of Fair Women*.

Notice the effect of the long *o*'s in this line. Why is it such an excellent description of the ocean?

Think of the sound of a retreating wave on a pebbly shore or shingle, and then compare it with Tennyson's line:

The scream of a maddened beach dragged
down by the waves,

and with this passage from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach:"

Listen! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

And from the same poem:

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar
 Retreating.

One of the most famous descriptions of the sea is
 Homer's line:

Be dakeon para thena poluthoisboio thalasses.
 He walked by the shore of the many-sounding sea.

We may not understand Greek but we can hear the
 sound of waves on the beach in the last two words.

Great poets have reproduced harsh sounds as well as
 melodious ones, as the following lines illustrate, particularly the *scraping* sound of the words *scrannel*, *wretched*,
straw.

Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.

—MILTON, *Lycidas*.

On a sudden open fly
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
 The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
 Harsh thunder.

—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*.

Tennyson is past-master in the use of onomatopœia.
Study his:

Moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

—*The Princess*.

And also:

I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.

—*The Passing of Arthur*.

Read Tennyson's "Song of the Brook" for the movement of flowing water:

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

The verse has the sound of rippling water.

Read Southey's once famous "Cataract of Lodore" for a description of a waterfall, though it is less a poem than a collection of descriptive words.

The cataract strong
Then plunges along,
Striking and raging
As if a war waging

Its caverns and rocks among;
Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping,
Swelling and sweeping,
Showering and springing,
Flying and flinging,
Writhing and wringing,
Eddying and whisking,
Spouting and frisking,
Turning and twisting,
Around and around
With endless rebound:
Smiting and fighting,
A sight to delight in;
Confounding, astounding,
Dizzying and deafening the ear with its sound.

Poe in "The Bells" pushed the principle of descriptive sound to its extreme limit.

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In the clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,

And a resolute endeavor,
Now—now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
O the bells, bells, bells,
What a tale their terror tells
 Of despair!
How they clang and clash and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
 By the twanging,
 And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
 In the jangling,
 And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
 Of the bells,—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells,—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

Compare Poe's poem with "The Bells of Shandon,"
by Francis Mahoney:

With deep affection
And recollection,
I often think of
 Those Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would
In the days of childhood,

Fling round my cradle
 Their magic spells.
On this I ponder,
Where'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder,
 Sweet Cork, of thee;
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
 Of the river Lee.

Another notable example of sound descriptive of the sense is Kipling's "Mandalay," with its tone-coloring of the "tinkly temple-bells:"

No! you won't 'eed nothin' else
 But them spicy garlic smells,
An' the sunshine, an' the palm trees, an' the tinkly temple-
 bells,
 On the road to Mandalay,
 Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost
 the Bay!

2. Movement

Onomatopœia includes movement as well as sound. Besides the onomatopœtic *word*, giving the sound of a thing, we may have the onomatopœtic *rhythm*, giving its movement. The refrain of the poem just quoted, "Manda-

lay," reproduces not only the sound but also the rhythm of a chime of bells.

Tennyson's lullaby,

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,

gives us the rhythm of a mother rocking her child to sleep. As she was an English mother and probably had no rocking chair, she must have swayed her body back and forth, for the swinging rhythm is there.

Rest, rest, on Mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon.

The effect of Virgil's well-known line:

Quadrupedante putrem quatit solida ungula campum,
(He shook the dusty earth with his solid four-footed hoof),

is gained by rhythm as well as sound, and it is the thundering hexameter that shakes the earth for us.

Compare Browning's "How they Brought the good News from Ghent to Aix" with Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," where the dactylic rhythm gives us the movement of a troupe of galloping horse.

Read the excellent poem by Caroline Norton, "The King of Denmark's Ride." The second stanza follows:

Thirty nobles saddled with speed;
(Hurry!)

Each one mounting a gallant steed
Which he kept for battle and days of need;
(Ride as though you were flying!)

Spurs were struck in the foaming flank,
Worn-out chargers stagger'd and sank;
Bridles were slacken'd and girths were burst,
But ride as they would, the king rode first,
For his Rose of the Isles lay dying!

Compare this with the slower movement of Longfellow's
"Ride of Paul Revere:"

And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

And then compare it with these descriptive words in
Scott's translation of Bürger's ballad of "Lenore:"

Tramp, tramp along the land they rode,
Splash, splash across the sea.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Name ten words whose sounds suggest their meanings.
2. Mention two harsh, unmusical words of this class. Examine Browning's "Childe Roland" and "Up at a Villa" for examples.
3. Give several words which suggest moral qualities, such as *slink*.
4. Should onomatopœtic words be used sparingly, or whenever possible?
5. Avoiding quotation, what suggestive words would

you select to describe the constant murmur of a small stream?

6. What two effects may be gained by the use of onomatopœia?

7. Which is the more easily attained?

8. Write a stanza descriptive of a race between hydro-aëroplanes or between automobiles, using words and rhythm to suggest both the appropriate sound and the speed.

9. Write a criticism, favorable or unfavorable, or both, of any poem you can find which contains a passage descriptive of (*a*) a bird's flight; (*b*) a horse's motion; (*c*) the sound or movement of the sea; (*d*) a singing voice.

10. Select a line of poetry whose movement is slow, and alter so as to quicken it.

11. Alter another line so as to make the movement slower.

12. Give examples of lines whose rhythm does not suit the sense.

13. Write a quatrain describing a chime of bells ringing for a wedding.

14. Write one describing the tolling of a funeral knell.

15. Write a couplet (*a*) descriptive of waves dashing on a rocky coast; (*b*) descriptive of waves rolling upon a sandy beach. See if you have used words that actually convey the sound of the water.

CHAPTER X

TONE-COLOR

Words are available for something which is more than knowledge. Words afford a more delicious music than the chords of any instrument; they are susceptible of richer colors than any painter's palette; and that they should be used merely for the transportation of intelligence, as a wheelbarrow carries brick, is not enough. The highest aspect of literature assimilates it to painting and music. Beyond and above all the domain of use lies beauty, and to aim at this makes literature an art.

—T. W. HIGGINSON, *Atlantic Essays*.

We may be able to express a beautiful thought in absolutely correct verse: our lines may contain the proper number of syllables, our accents may fall in the right places, our rhymes may be perfect, our rhythm may be accurate, and yet our verse be far from beautiful.

Why is this?

Because the *sound-effect* of our verse may not be beautiful. We may not have carefully selected the separate words, not only with a view to their individual sounds, but also to the sounds of the words with which they are combined.

The ear delights in harmony, in contrast, and in a certain amount of unobtrusive repetition. The words which we choose should therefore be harmonious in themselves, the rhyme-groups should be contrasted (see chapter on Rhyme), and certain sounds or letters should be judiciously repeated.

The words which a poet uses may be compared to the bits of colored glass with which a worker in mosaic forms his picture. As the artist combines, contrasts, and harmonizes his colored bits of material, so the poet combines, contrasts, and harmonizes the syllables of his words, echoing vowel with vowel, enhancing consonant with consonant, and the resulting quality we call *tone-color*.

Apart from their appeal to the mind and feeling, the difference in the beauty of two poems, both equally lofty in subject and treatment, or even in two stanzas of the same poem, is usually due, in the last analysis, to the variations of this quality.

Remember that we are not now discussing thought or emotion, but simply *sound*. Yet it is true that an exquisite sound will give us an exquisite emotion. Read the following stanza:

Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is gathered to an angel's feet.

—COLERIDGE, *Christabel*.

Now why should this description of a lady's room fill us with distinct pleasure? There is no particular thought here; there is no particular emotion; there is simply suggestion by means of exquisite sound.

If we are not discussing thought or feeling, neither are we discussing the particular meaning of words. One of

the most beautiful poems in the English language has very little intellectual meaning, and was admittedly written as the recollection of an opium dream—the “Kubla Khan” of Coleridge. Its excellence consists chiefly in its tone-color.

So, tone-color has nothing to do with thought, or feeling, or meaning. It has to do with sound and sound only, and the more we study it the more we shall discover how great poets produced by this means lines of undying beauty. But, of course, this is not to say that most passages of charming tone-color possess no thought, or feeling, or meaning!

Mr. Kipling quotes three lines of “Kubla Khan” as “The high-water mark that but two of the sons of Adam have reached.” Here are the lines:

A savage place as holy and enchanted
As e’er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

And Kipling goes on to say, “Remember that in all the millions permitted there are no more than five—five little lines—of which one can say: ‘These are the pure magic. These are the clear Vision. The rest is only poetry,’ ” and then he gives us the other two:

Magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in fairy-lands forlorn.

—KEATS, *Ode to a Nightingale*.

Before seeing if we can analyze the beauty of these two passages, let us first take two easier ones. We have said

that the obviousness of the alliteration of Swinburne's line,

The lilies and languors of virtue,

rather repels us. Contrast it with this line from Milton:

The pilot of the Galilean lake.

Here are four *l*'s to Swinburne's three, but there is no feeling of excess, and the music is far subtler. Why is this? It is because the *l*'s, with one exception, are not initial *l*'s; they come to us unexpectedly and unobtrusively, mostly in the middle of the words, and the effect is enhanced by the fact that the one initial *l* instead of being near the beginning of the line, and showing us what to expect, comes with the last word of all, giving us a sense of satisfaction like a musical chord resolving what has gone before. Take the Coleridge lines before quoted:

A savage place as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

Mark the varying sounds of *a* in this selection. Mark the *n*'s, then the *m*'s, then the *o*'s, and then the *l*'s. Do you see how they echo, contrast, and enhance each other?

Take the Keats selection:

Magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in fairy-lands forlorn.

Here we have the varying *a*'s again, the *m*'s and *n*'s, the

o's and *l's*; and we have a new element of beauty in the recurrent *r* sounds.

It must be remembered that some sounds are beautiful in themselves while some are not. The *s* sound which occurs so often in English, is not beautiful. Tennyson used to say that he had never been guilty of putting two *s's* together. He meant at the end of one word and the beginning of the following word. The Greeks disliked the *s* sound and avoided it as much as possible. Another thing the Greeks abhorred was the hiatus, or the clashing of two similar vowel-sounds. In poetry it was absolutely forbidden. In English we try to avoid it, for instance by writing *mine eyes* for *my eyes*.

But other sounds—more especially vowel-sounds—are peculiarly pleasing. A distinguished Frenchman once said that the *i* sound was the most beautiful in the English language, and he also said that *Lily-of-the-Valley* was the most beautiful English word.

We easily recognize the beauty of sound in some foreign words, the Philippine *Iloilo*—pronounced e-lo-e-lo—for example, and the Hawaiian *Aloha*.

The ear derives a certain pleasure from repetition, as we have seen in considering alliteration, but we also found that a subtle and unexpected repetition, varying between initial letters and letters in the middle of words, pleased us more than marked alliteration. Therefore we admired Milton's line,

The pilot of the Galilean lake.

If, then, certain sounds are musical in themselves, a

passage containing those sounds will probably be musical, and if the ear delights in *unexpected* repetition, the more a poet weaves such delicate, subsidiary echoes into his verse, the more beautiful, verbally, that verse will be.

We may concede that the *i* sound and the *l* sound are musical and pleasing. But there is short *i*, and long *i*. We shall find that we gain a new harmony by playing with both. For example, let us take a passage containing short and long *i*'s, and *l*'s—the speech of Perdita to Florizel in Shakespeare's "A Winter's Tale." By carefully marking some of the letters we shall see why the lines are beautiful.

Daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take
 The winds of March *with* beauty; *violets*, *dim*,
 But sweeter than the *lids* of Juno's eyes,
 Or Cytherea's breath; *pale* *primroses*,
 That *die* *unmarried*, ere they can behold
 Bright Phoebus *in* his strength, a *malady*
Most incident to *maids*; *bold* *oxlips*, and
 The crown *imperial*; *lilies* of all kinds
 The flower-de-luce being one! Oh! these I lack,
 To make you garlands of.

This passage will repay most careful study. The music of it is produced by playing on the sounds of *d*, *l*, *i* and *m*, though the *n*'s also have their part in it by slightly varying the *m* sound. Now give especial attention to sounds of long *i*. Notice particularly the third line where the *w*'s of *winds* and *with* change into the related sound of

v in *violets*. Take also the last word of the first line and the two last words of the third,

daffodils,
violets, dim.

You have there a delicious music expressed in a form more sweet than any rhyme.

We can easily see that *o*'s and *r*'s give sonorous value, and *m*'s and *n*'s resonance, while *b*'s and *p*'s—the labials that close the lips in utterance—detract from these qualities. Read aloud the beginning of Parsons' "Ode on a Bust of Dante:"

See, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song!

The sonorous syllables roll majestically along and the effect is produced by *o*'s contrasted with broad *a*'s, and by *m*'s and *n*'s, and *l*'s and *r*'s. Curiously enough there is no *p*, and but one *b* in this whole selection.

Here is another sonorous and solemn example, the finest lines that Andrew Lang ever wrote:

The bones of Agamemnon are a show,
And ruined is his royal monument.

Here again are our old friends, *o*'s, contrasted with broad *a*'s; and here are *m*'s and *n*'s and *r*'s. On the other hand, the short *i* sound, and the *t*, convey a sense of

littleness, of attenuation. See Mercutio's description of Queen Mab's chariot:

Drawn by a team of little atomies.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*.

But as for faeries that will flit,
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But all too spare of flesh.

—TENNYSON, *The Talking Oak*.

We have seen how Matthew Arnold and Tennyson used long vowels and sonorous consonants to convey one aspect of the ocean, "Long, withdrawing roar," "Cold, heavy-plunging foam." Notice how another view of the sea is exquisitely given in this rendition of a line of Homer:

The innumerable, twinkling smile of ocean.

Note the effect of the many short syllables reflecting the light, like facets of a diamond. The same effect of short syllables may be seen in Shakspeare's

The multitudinous seas incarnadine.

—*Macbeth*.

The effects which these poets attained were not the results of accident, therefore let no young poet think that conscious and painstaking selection of word-sounds is beneath him. Coleridge would not have dreamed "Kubla Khan" in its perfection if he had not been in the habit of choosing his words with care when he was awake.

Tennyson worked two days over three lines of "Come into the Garden, Maud."

Stevenson says, "One sound suggests, echoes, demands, and harmonises with another, and the art of rightly using these concordances is the final art in literature."

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. If the poet's ear is not sensitive to musical sounds, do you believe that through study and attention he may produce pleasing tone-color effects?

2. Do you suppose that Shakespeare or Keats relied upon the ear alone to secure euphony?

3. Recall one or two popular, classical songs, and mark the number of words, prolonged by the tune, that are in themselves rich in tone-color.

4. In any of the sustained passages in Shakespeare's plays, note the generous use of assonant words.

5. Analyze Coleridge's stanza describing Christabel's room, pointing out the recurrence of certain sounds as an element of beauty.

6. Select three poems full of tone-color and point out at least three lines of each which illustrate this quality.

7. Revise one of your own poems with a view to improving its tone values.

8. Write a list of themes which seem to you to be inviting, with this chapter in mind.

9. Work up one of them into a short poem, using tone-color discriminatingly.

10. Write two stanzas descriptive of the sea (a) in color; (b) in storm, seeking chiefly beautiful tonal effects.

CHAPTER XI

METERS AND THE STANZA

Every poet, then, is a versifier; every fine poet an excellent one; and he is the best whose verse exhibits the greatest amount of strength, sweetness, straightforwardness, unsuperfluousness, variety, and oneness;—oneness, that is to say, consistency, in the general impression, metrical and moral; and variety, or every pertinent diversity of tone and rhythm, in the process.

—LEIGH HUNT, *What is Poetry?*

The poet who has an idea and an emotion to express is early confronted with the choice of a meter. Often, no doubt, he has no conscious choice in the matter—his idea and his emotion come to him pulsing with a rhythm of their own, and he has only to follow his own first feeling. So we may say that a good poem usually brings its meter with it, and the form is the inevitable outcome of the germ.

At other times, however, the poet must deliberately select the form best fitted to embody his thought and feeling. He may choose one of the time-honored patterns for his verse, or he may weave a new one for himself; but whatever his choice, let him respect its conventions, rejoice in its complications, and find a new inspiration in its difficulties. He must first show himself a master of regularity and then admit no irregularity but such as may arise from the inner meaning of his verse. He must prove that he can keep laws before he presumes to ignore them.

It will do him no harm to experiment in all familiar meters of English verse, and then when his great idea comes to him, he will have ready a fitting garment in which to clothe it. His subject will largely determine his choice—he will not be likely to write an Ode on Hunting, or a Triolet on the Death of Lincoln.

Meters, like other things, follow the fashion and change with the changing years. Let us glance at some that were popular in their day. Note, however, that these are not now considered primarily as examples of rhyme, even when the old names would so indicate, but as specimens of meter and stanza, and therefore showing the sequence of rhymes in the stanza arrangement as well as the line measure.

1. Types of Stanza

Riding Rhyme.—The meter of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" was called Riding Rhyme from the fact that the Tales were told as the pilgrims rode in company from London to Canterbury. It consists of iambic pentameter lines—each therefore containing five iambic feet—rhymed in couplets. The spelling has been slightly modernized in the following example from the opening lines of the *Prologue*, with accents added to indicate the extra syllables, for many words have shortened their pronunciation in later centuries.

When that Aprilè with his showers swoot ¹	(a)
The drought of March hath piercèd to the root,	(a)
And bathèd every vein in such liqoûr	(b)

¹ Sweet.

Of which virtúe engendered is the flower; (b)
 When Zephyrús eke with his sweetè breath
 Inspirèd hath in every holt and heath
 The tender croppès, and the youngè sun
 Hath in the Ram his halfè course yrun,
 And smallè fowlès maken melody,
 That sleepen all the night with open eye,—
 So pricketh hem¹ natúre in hir courages²—
 Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages—
 And palmers for to seeken strangè strands,
 To fernè hallows³ couth⁴ in sundry lands;
 And specially, from every shirès end
 Of Engèland, to Canterbury they wend,
 The holy blissful martyr⁵ for to seek,
 That hath them holpen when that they were sick.

Rhyme Royal was the stanza of Chaucer's "Troylas and Crysedè," and of King James's "The King's Quhair." It is thus imitated by William Morris, whose modern English will serve us better than the aforementioned archaic verse. The measure is iambic pentameter. The letters in the margin indicate the sequence of the rhymes.

In a far country that I cannot name, (a)
 And on a year long ages past away, (b)

¹ Them.

² Their hearts.

³ Distant holy men, or saints.

⁴ Known.

⁵ Thomas à Becket.

A King there dwelt, in rest and ease and fame, (a)
 And richer than the Emperor is today; (b)
 The very thought of what this man might say (b)
 From dusk to dawn kept many a lord awake, (c)
 For fear of him did many a great man quake. (c)

—*The Earthly Paradise, The Proud King.*

Poulter's Measure.—In Queen Elizabeth's day, the so-called Poulter's Measure was said to be the commonest sort of verse. It took its name from the poulterers, who gave twelve eggs for the first dozen and fourteen for the second—a custom long since abandoned! The meter consists of a line of iambic hexameter—six iambic feet—alternating with a line of seven, iambic heptameter.

The fear of future foes exiles my present joy,
 And wit me warnes to shun such snares as threaten
 mine annoy.

—QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Ottava Rima (eighth rhyme) was a stanza of eight lines, the first six, forming the sestet, rhymed alternately, and the two last a rhyming couplet. It was used by Spenser, Milton, Keats and Byron. The meter is iambic pentameter.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the rocks and rills, (a)
 While the still morn went out with sandals gray, (b)
 He touch'd the tender stops of various quills, (a)
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay: (b)
 And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills, (a)
 And now was dropt into the western bay; (b)

At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue; (c)
 Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new. (c)

—MILTON, *Lycidas*.

The Spenserian Stanza was invented by Edmund Spenser and is always called by his name.

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore, (a)
 The deare remembrance of his dying Lord, (b)
 For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore, (a)
 And dead, as living, ever him ador'd: (b)
 Upon his shield the like was also scor'd, (b)
 For soveraine hope which in his helpe he had (c)
 Right faithful true he was in deede and word, (b)
 But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad; (c)
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad. (c)

—*The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto I.

This stanza consists of nine lines, eight in iambic pentameter, and the ninth an Alexandrine—which will be explained presently. The rhyme-scheme is irregular, as the key letters point out. In his great poem Spenser sustains this difficult meter for 3848 stanzas, a feat which would daunt our modern poets. It is also the stanza used in Byron's "Childe Harold," Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night," and Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes."

Terza Rima (third rhyme) is in iambic rhythm, not necessarily pentameter, and is usually written continuously and not in stanzas. It consists of groups of three lines; each rhyme is used three times; at the end of the canto or poem an extra line is added which rhymes with the middle

line of the preceding group of three. It is the meter of Dante's "Divine Comedy," and has seldom been essayed in English. Mrs. Browning used it in "Casa Guidi Windows."

For me who stand in Italy today	(a)
Where worthier poets stood and sang before,	(b)
I kiss their footsteps, yet their words gainsay,	(a)
I can but muse in hope upon this shore	(b)
Of Golden Arno as it shoots away	(a)
Through Florence' heart beneath her bridges four.	(b)

Heroic Couplets.—In the 18th Century, lines rhymed in pairs, called couplets, were the favorite form. When written in iambic pentameter, these were called Heroic Couplets, the meter of Pope's translation of the "Iliad," a heroic poem.

Achilles' wrath to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumber'd, heav'nly goddess sing.

An Alexandrine is a line consisting of a series of six iambic feet, or twelve syllables, called iambic hexameter. The last line of the Spenserian Stanza is an Alexandrine, illustrated in the foregoing stanza from Spenser's "Faerie Queen."

A needless Alexandrine ends the song
That like a wounded snake drags its slow length
along.

—POPE.

Elegiac Verse, or verse composed as a memorial of the dead, was composed of alternate dactylic hexameters and pentameters.

In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column
In the pentameter aye || falling in melody back.

—COLERIDGE, *Translation from Schiller*.

Notice in the foregoing pentameter the long syllable followed by the cæsura, or pause, after the word "aye." The cæsura is treated in the chapter on *Blank Verse*.

Common Meter is a four-line stanza written in alternate iambic tetrameter and trimeter, with alternate lines rhymed.

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

—COWPER.

Short Meter is a four-line stanza with lines one, two, and four in iambic trimeter, and the third line a tetrameter. The alternate lines are rhymed.

To comfort and to bless,
To find a balm for woe,
To tend the lone and fatherless
Is angel's work below.

—M. W. How.

Long Meter is a four-line stanza written in iambic tetrameter, the lines rhyming in pairs.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below, etc.

The Couplet.—We have spoken of Pope's use of the couplet; the word is also used to denote a poem of two lines, as the following "Inscription for a Well in Memory of the Martyrs of the War," by Emerson, which is in rhymed iambic pentameter.

Fall, stream, from Heaven to bless; return as well;
So did our sons; Heaven met them as they fell.

It is also used to designate a stanza of two lines, as in Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," written in trochaic octameter, with the couplets rhymed.

Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the
shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and
more.

The Triplet.—Tennyson uses the triplet, or stanza of three lines, in iambic tetrameter, and but one rhyme to the stanza.

A still small voice spake unto me,
"Life is so full of misery
Were it not better not to be?"

—*The Two Voices.*

As a three-line poem the triplet is much more rare. Prof. Brander Matthews, in his "A Study of Versification," quotes the following from Robert Herrick:

ON HIMSELF

Lost to the world, lost to himself, alone
Here now I rest under this marble stone,
In depth of silence, heard and seen of none.

The Quatrain is, correctly speaking, a poem of four lines embodying a complete thought, as this of Father Tabb on "Fame:"

Their noonday never knows
What names immortal are:
'Tis night alone that shows
How star surpasseth star.

The four-line stanza, however, sometimes called the quatrain, is our most familiar form of verse. We have seen the ordinary arrangement in Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," where the alternate lines rhyme, and the meter is trochaic tetrameter, with the second and fourth lines one syllable short.

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream;
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Tennyson varies the rhyme-sequence in "In Memoriam"

by coupling his first and fourth lines, and his second and third. The meter here is iambic tetrameter.

I hold it truth with one who sings	(a)
To one clear harp in divers tones,	(b)
That men may rise on stepping-stones	(b)
Of their dead selves to higher things.	(a)

In Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyám we have still another rhyme arrangement; the lines are iambic pentameter.

Indeed the idols I have loved so long,	(a)
Have done my credit in men's minds much wrong;	(a)
Have drowned my glory in a shallow cup,	(b)
And sold my reputation for a song.	(a)

Tennyson gives us still another type of the quatrain, which is called *second and fourth line short*, and is patently irregular throughout.

The poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above,
 Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

—*The Poet.*

The same poet uses the quatrain with interesting and effective freedom in "Crossing the Bar," which is a miracle of variety producing unity.

First and Fourth Line Short presents still another quatrain type. Notice the poet's use of irregularities in the rhythm.

Whither, midst falling dew, (a)
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day, (b)
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue (a)
Thy solitary way? (b)

—BRYANT, *To a Waterfowl*.

The Five-Line Stanza.—Of this there are many varieties. A favorite one is rhymed *a, b, a, b, a*; another, *a, b, a, a, b*; another, *a, b, a, b, b*.

That was I, you heard last night, (a)
Where there rose no moon at all, (b)
Nor, to pierce the strained and tight (a)
Tent of heaven, a planet small: (b)
Life was dead, and so was light. (a)

—BROWNING, *A Serenade at the Villa*.

Tonight this sunset spreads two golden wings (a)
Cleaving the western sky; (b)
Winged too with wind it is, and winnowings (a)
Of birds; as if the day's last hour in rings (a)
Of strenuous flight must die. (b)

—ROSSERTI, *Sunset Wings*.

Teach us, sprite or bird, (a)
What sweet thoughts are thine; (b)
I have never heard (a)
Praise of love or wine (b)
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. (b)

—SHELLEY, *The Skylark*.

A *Six-Line Stanza*, sextet, or sestet, may be rhymed
a, b, a, b, a, b, or *a, b, a, b, c, c*, or *a, b, c, c, b, a*.

She walks in beauty, like the night (a)
 Of cloudless climes and starry skies; (b)
 And all that's best of dark or bright (a)
 Meet in her aspect and her eyes; (b)
 Thus mellowed to that tender light (a)
 Which heaven to gaudy day denies. (b)

—BYRON, *She Walks in Beauty*.

My days among the dead are past; (a)
 Around me I behold, (b)
 Where'er these casual eyes are cast, (a)
 The mighty minds of old: (b)
 My never failing friends are they, (c)
 With whom I converse day by day. (c)

—SOUTHEY, *The Scholar*.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach; (a)
 Three fields to cross till a farm appears; (b)
 A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch (c)
 And blue spurt of a lighted match, (c)
 And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears, (b)
 Then the two hearts beating each to each! (a)

—BROWNING, *Meeting at Night*.

Burns's favorite six-line stanza runs *a, a, a, b, a, b*.

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r, (a)
 Thou's met me in an evil hour, (a)
 For I maun crush amang the stoure (a)
 Thy slender stem: (b)

To spare thee now is past my pow'r (a)
 Thou bonnie gem. (b)

—*To a Mountain Daisy.*

Tail-Rhyme Stanza is a stanza of which the rhyme order is *a, a, b, c, c, b*. The *b, b* is the tail-rhyme and the lines containing it are usually shorter than the others.

And if I should live to be (a)
 The last leaf upon the tree, (a)
 In the spring, (b)
 Let them laugh, as I do now, (c)
 At the old forsaken bough (c)
 Where I cling. (b)

—HOLMES, *The Last Leaf*.

There may be more than two lines of the sections *a, a*, and *c, c*, as in the following:

Fair stood the wind for France, (a)
 When we our sails advance, (a)
 Nor now to prove our chance (a)
 Longer will tarry; (b)
 But putting to the main, (c)
 At Caux the mouth of Seine, (c)
 With all his martial train (c)
 Landed King Harry. (b)

—DRAYTON, *The Battle of Agincourt*.

2. Indenting

This seems a fitting point at which to call attention to the almost universal custom of indenting, or setting

in, certain lines of a stanza in writing, or preparing it for the printer. The practice varies so greatly that no fixed rule may be stated, but an examination of the stanzas quoted in this chapter will show that the three prevailing arrangements are to indent not at all, indent only the first line, or align the first words of those lines which rhyme with each other. Unless the poet feels secure enough in his mastery to hew out a new way for himself, it is better to follow the scheme of indentation used by some poet who uses the type of stanza which is to be followed in technique.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Look up the derivation of the words *stanza* and *meter*.
2. Make a scrap-book collection of every possible form of stanza, beginning with the couplet. So far as you can, give them names and mark the accents.
3. Cut from the magazines ten different sorts of stanza; for example, three several quatrains would be regarded as three kinds if the feet used were different.
4. When a thought comes to mind already moulded in a rhythmic line, is it likely to be cast in a meter appropriate to its expression?
5. In reading a poem for the first time, do you find that the meter and the stanza-forms usually attract your attention?
6. If a meter obtrudes upon your notice, does that suggest that its choice was unfortunate?
7. In your opinion, would some of Hood's serious

poems in jingling meter have been better had he moulded them in forms more popular with other poets?

8. Will more than one meter be thoroughly appropriate to the expression of any given thought?

9. Write a line in iambic pentameter.

10. Write an Alexandrine line.

11. Select three stanza-forms shown in this chapter and write a stanza in each style, considering fitness first of all.

12. (a) Recast in another stanza-form a stanza from one of the poets. (b) Apart from its poetic language, if that is materially altered, does it suffer by the change?

13. Take an ornate passage from either Burke, Macaulay, Emerson, or Irving, and do it over into verse. Note that exclamatory sentences will often aid you in this sort of translation.

14. Take one of your own quatrains and change it into a tail-rhyme stanza.

15. Select one of your own themes, carefully consider the most suitable meter and stanza-form, and write a series of verses. For practice purposes, do not hesitate to model your work on that of others, yet seek to cultivate originality. Invent other exercises which will give you a mastery of many metrical and stanza forms. Do a great deal of recasting in order to attain to variety.

CHAPTER XII

IRREGULARITIES

The more inspired the poet may be and the loftier the theme, the less likely are we to turn the crystal over in search of flaws. When we are rapt out of ourselves we fail to notice any little liberties the poet may have taken with the language, and we are ready enough to pardon them if they attract our attention.

—BRANDER MATTHEWS, *A Study of Versification*.

Irregularity should proceed from strength and not from weakness. Great poets used many irregularities, but only because they were so well able to do without them. "Nice customs curtesy to great kings," but ordinary mortals had better observe nice customs.

1. Irregularity is Allowable if it Indicates Difference in
Meaning.

When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Winter's Tale*.

Here the verse dances with the extra syllable in "A wave o' the sea."

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up to the sky.

—COLERIDGE, *Christabel*.

Here Coleridge makes the red leaf dance with his dancing verse. In his introduction to this poem he says, "The meter of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle; namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion."

Coleridge did good service in delivering English verse from the fetters in which it had been bound by Pope.

A beautiful example of irregularity caused by, and enhancing, the meaning of verse, is found in the exquisite opening lines of Tennyson's "The Sleeping Palace."

The vary | ing year | with blade | and sheaf |
Clothes and | reclothes | the hap | py plains. |

There is, you see, an extra syllable in the word *varying*. Suppose we substitute for it the word *changing*.

The chang | ing year | with blade | and sheaf |
Clothes and | reclothes | the hap | py plains. |

We have here absolute regularity and the same meaning, but the beauty of the line has fled. The slight turn given to Tennyson's line by the extra light syllable in *varying*, makes us see the change of season, and the sound of the

y gives us pleasure as it is repeated in the sound of the word *year*.

2. Other Irregularities

Elision is the partial or entire loss of a vowel-sound at the end of a word when the next begins with a vowel, as *th'* for *the*, *i'* *th'* for *in the*, and *o' th'* for *of the*. It is used not only to avoid a false accent but also to subdue unimportant words in the line.

Slurring is passing lightly over unimportant syllables for the same purposes as in the case of the elision. Thus, *radiant*, or *beauteous* may be pronounced in the time of two syllables; the extra syllable is not suppressed but hurried over, giving variety and lightness to the verse. It should be noted, however, that this sort of irregularity, in common with all others, must be used but seldom, or at most with careful intention. Here are two good examples:

From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold.

—MILTON.

A violet by a mossy stone.

—WORDSWORTH.

Contraction is the suppression of an entire syllable. Some words, like *heaven* and *power*, may be pronounced as one syllable if the meter requires it. Formerly, contracted words were written *heav'n*, *pow'r*, but it is now the custom to print them in full.

Expansion is accenting a normally silent syllable for

the sake of the meter. Some poets indicate this expansion by the addition of an accent, as in the following example:

Adown the glen, rode armèd men.

—CAMPBELL, *Lord Ullin's Daughter*.

In the case of some words this practice is almost universal. The word *beloved*, for instance, is usually pronounced as three syllables in poetry.

In *Hovering Accent* the stress, instead of falling definitely on one syllable, hovers between two—between word-accent and verse-accent. This irregularity is explained by some authorities as the introduction of a *spondee*—a foot, both syllables of which are accented—into a line of another sort.

That through the green cornfield did pass.

—SHAKESPEARE.

Wrenched Accent throws the stress definitely on an unaccented syllable, which is intended to be read aloud with this odd accentuation.

Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea.

—*Old Ballad*.

Among modern poets Swinburne and Rossetti sometimes employ the wrenched accent, but it is found mostly in old ballads. There it seems naïve enough, but in more sophisticated verse it sounds artificial and should be

avoided. The following is a particularly audacious specimen:

For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player.

—SWINBURNE.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. When a thought can be expressed in faultless meter, is it ever wise to introduce an irregularity? Give reasons for your answer.

2. What is the usual effect upon a well balanced line of the addition of one or more syllables?

3. Should such words as *heaven* and *hour* be considered as words of one or of two syllables?

4. May they properly be considered to have whichever number is desired?

5. Do such words receive more stress when they are located at the end of a line?

6. What is meant by *elision*? Illustrate.

7. Write a *stanza* upon the theme of rain beating upon forest trees, and attempt by the use of irregularities in the lines to suggest something of the movement of leaves and branches.

8. Search for examples of all the irregularities explained in this chapter. If possible, clip or copy them from magazines for your collection. Write several stanzas using some of the irregularities you have discovered.

9. Point out the irregularities in a page from Shakespeare, Milton, or Tennyson.

10. Point out any which mar rather than improve the verse.

11. In general, does any one form of irregularity seem more useful than others? Which?

CHAPTER XIII

EPIC POETRY

Loose and free and of slow growth, the epic poem was for centuries the dominant story-form. It took the wealth of material in which the ancient world abounded and strung the scattered stories upon a strand of personality. Thus a Ulysses or an Æneas became the hero of tales originally told of many another. From prehistoric times down to the years when the printed page spread the tale open before every eye, the resident or the traveling story-teller was almost the only purveyor of fiction, and he was "as welcome as is a visitor with recent magazines to a lighthouse on some distant and lonely island."

—*Writing the Short-Story.*

Reserving for later chapters the treatment of blank verse (Chapter XIV) and hexameters (Chapter XX) as the meters usually adopted by writers of heroic poetry, it is now time to consider this greatest of all poetic types.

An epic is a long narrative poem which deals impressively with some lofty theme, usually centering its action about gods, demi-gods, or heroes.

Higher or heroic epics were the first and greatest. They were not individual in authorship, but national—they grew by accretion, developing from time to time by the inclusion of the myths, legends, heroic struggles, and religious beliefs of a people whose life they thus came to typify and express. Naturally, they were not the production of any one man, for there were no poets in those days—that is, no individuals who claimed certain verses

as their own. There were only singers who chanted the traditional lines which had come down from a misty past, and in the course of ages these lines became uniform and polished like pebbles in the current of a brook.

Such were the Homeric poems, the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey;" but they differ from other heroic sagas in having come down from their crude beginnings, to continue their course through the life of the most cultivated and artistic people of the world, like a stream, which, starting in the rocky summits, winds its way at last among the gardens and cities of the plain. In their final form the Homeric epics are the arrangement of educated as well as noble minds, and to this we owe their wonderful unity, composition, and plot. Eventually their arrangement was guarded by law and from early in the fifth century, B. C., they were publicly recited at Athens in a prescribed order.

Other national epics—the development of the recited and not of the written poem—are the East Indian "Mahabharata," the Saxon "Beowulf," the Icelandic "Sagas," the Finnish "Kalevala," and the Old German "Niebelungen Lied." Like the Homeric poems, they were the slow growth of generations.

Among us, there can never be a new national epic of this impersonal character. The invention of printing, the spread of education, the breaking down of national barriers, and the fact that poets are not content to remain anonymous, are factors which unite to render impossible such a revival of the form.

The written or art epic is a different matter. It is the

production of one man. It is not a growth, it is something made. Virgil's "Æneid" and Milton's "Paradise Lost" are lofty examples of the written epic.

Dante's "Divine Comedy" may be called an epic. He called it a comedy because, in his day, a comedy meant a narrative that did not end tragically, while a tragedy meant "the story of those who had fallen from high to low estate." Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered" and Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" are also art epics, and likewise bear the names of their true authors.

An epic should tell a story, yet not comment or moralize upon it. It may, and is pretty certain to, contain separate episodes and dialogue. The meter must be uniform, and we may add, the story must be interesting. The "Odyssey," apart from its other merits, has been called the finest story in the world; it is more interesting than a novel, more exciting than a best-seller.

All of the great epics which are the product of other languages may now be read in English translation, any one of which is good enough to convey a satisfactory idea of the original, both as regards content and form.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Make a list of all the epics you can.
2. Which are higher epics and which art epics?
3. Tell briefly the story of any one.
4. Examine several and copy specimens of their meters.
5. Write a few lines in imitation of each.

CHAPTER XIV

BLANK VERSE

That which is the glory of blank verse, as a vehicle of poetry, is also its danger and its difficulty. Its freedom from the fetters of rime, the infinite variability of the metrical structure of its lines, the absence of couplets and stanzas,—all assimilate it to prose. It is the easiest of all conceivable meters to write; it is the hardest to write well. Its metrical requirements are next to nothing; its poetical requirements are infinite. It was Byron, I believe, who remarked, that it differed from other meters in this, that whereas they required a certain proportion of lines, some more, some less, to be good, in a blank verse *every* line must be good.

—SHADWORTH H. HODGSON, *English Verse*; quoted in MATTHEWS' *A Study of Versification*.

Blank verse is not merely unrhymed poetry, but the term has come to mean a particular metrical form. As commonly understood, blank verse consists of a line of ten syllables with five beats at regular intervals—an unaccented followed by an accented syllable, forming five iambic feet, or iambic pentameter. This metrical scheme, which is sometimes called English Heroic Measure, because of its peculiar adaptability to noble or heroic themes, is the meter of Milton's "Paradise Lost:"

I may | assert | eter | nal Prov | idence |
And jus | tify | the ways | of God | to men. |

—*Paradise Lost*, Book I, Line 26.

It will be interesting to read a master poet's own description of the meter of his great poem.

1. Milton on Blank Verse

"The measure is English Heroic Verse, without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter. * * * * * True musical delight—consists only in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the same variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings. * * * This neglect then of Rime, so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteem'd an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to Heroic Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Riming."

Although Milton terms his poem "An example set, the first in English," it was not the first English heroic poem in blank verse. Henry Howard, that Earl of Surrey to whom we owe the introduction of the sonnet, was the first to attempt blank verse in English, in his translation of the second and fourth books of Virgil's "*Æneid*." The following is a specimen of Surrey's blank verse:

I lived and ran the course fortune did grant;
And under earth my great ghost now shall wend;
A goodly town I built and saw my walls;
Happy, alas, too happy, if these coasts
The Trojan ships had never touched aye.

Surrey's verse has occasional roughnesses and crudenesses, but on the whole its effect is one of too much uniformity and monotony, due to his tendency to regard the line as the unit, and so to terminate his thought at the end of each. The mind can take no wide sweep or lofty flight when it is continually halted at each ten syllables.

Monotony, indeed, is the great fault to be guarded against by the amateur writer of blank verse. If he be not careful, he will find that his series of five iambic feet will go jogging endlessly along without relief, without variety, without power or beauty.

To counteract this tendency, let him study the blank verse of Milton. There is no monotony in "Paradise Lost." The music is endlessly varied, and this variety is gained in two ways: first, by the wide sweep of thought over-leaping the bondage of the line and forming groups or stanzas of varying length, or as Milton describes it, "the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another." Second, by the constant shifting of the place of the cæsura, or pause, thus delighting the ear with a continual change of cadence.

2. Examples of Milton's Groups of Lines

If thou beest he—But O, how fallen! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads though bright!

—*Paradise Lost*, Book I, Line 87.

He spake; and to confirm his words, outflew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell: highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven.

—Book I, Line 669.

Milton's periods, with no hint of weakness or fatigue, sometimes sustain a flight of as many as twenty-two lines, before the thought and the verse alight together.

3. The Cæsura or Pause

Cowper says of blank verse, "The writer in this kind of meter, in order that he may be musical, must exhibit all the variations, as he proceeds, of which ten syllables are susceptible. Between the first and the last, there is no place at which he must not occasionally pause, and the place of the pause must be continually shifted."¹

In a line so long as a pentameter, or a hexameter, a pause is sometimes needed in order to take breath in reciting or reading aloud. This pause, or division, is called the *cæsura*, and its place in the line is determined by the meaning of the words. In classic verse, it fell at the end of a word, but usually in the middle of a foot, and it was governed by various complicated rules which are not observed in modern practice. In English verse it should fall

¹ Note also the quotation from Hodgson which introduces this chapter.

at the end of both foot and word, *but not always at the end of the same foot*, or an effect of monotony and dull uniformity will be the result. Milton constantly varies the location of the cæsura with excellent effect, as the following examples will show:

Pause after 1st foot.

The careful plowman doubting stands,
Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
Prove chaff. × On the other side, Satan, alarm'd,
etc.

—Book IV, Line 985.

Pause after 2nd foot.

On his right
The radiant image of his glory sat,
His on | ly Son: × on earth he first beheld, etc.

Book III, Line 64.

Pause after 3rd foot.

On to their mornings rural work they haste,
Among | sweet dews | and flowers, × where any row, etc.

Book V, Line 212.

Pause after 4th foot.

So under fiery cope together rushed
Both battles main, with ruinous assault
And in | extin | guishable rage × all heaven, etc.

—Book VI, Line 217.

4. Unrhymed Verse

As intimated at the beginning of this chapter, not all unrhymed poems can justly be called blank verse, which,

as we have said, is a heroic measure. Some are lyrics, like the following:

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

—TENNYSON, *The Princess*.

I have had playmates, I have had companions
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

—LAMB, *The Old Familiar Faces*.

Browning's "One Word More" is in unrhymed, trochaic verse and its effect is lyrical.

There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together;
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Name an advantage that blank verse holds over rhymed verse.
2. What special fault is most likely to creep into blank verse?
3. What is the meaning of the word *cæsura*?
4. From Milton, pick out at least six examples of its use.

5. Need blank verse be always in iambic meter?
6. Would the meter of *Hiawatha* be properly classed as blank verse?
7. Do you find equal enjoyment in reading blank verse and rhymed iambic verse?
8. Can you name a modern drama, written in blank verse, that has won popularity?
9. How does blank verse differ from the unrhymed lyric?
10. Write in blank verse a short description of the country near your home.
11. Select a narrative prose passage of distinction and recast it into epical blank verse.
12. Tell a short-story in epical blank verse. Introduce the pause for both practice and effect.

CHAPTER XV

DRAMATIC POETRY

So many things among men have been handed down from century to century and from nation to nation, and the human mind is in general so slow to invent, that originality in any department of mental exertion is everywhere a rare phenomenon. We are desirous of seeing the result of the efforts of inventive geniuses when, regardless of what in the same line has elsewhere been carried to a high degree of perfection, they set to work in good earnest to invent altogether for themselves; when they lay the foundation of the new edifice on uncovered ground, and draw all the preparations, all the building materials, from their own resources. We participate, in some measure, in the joy of success, when we see them advance rapidly from their first helplessness and need to a finished mastery in their art.

—A. W. VON SCHLEGEL, *Dramatic Art and Literature*.

The subject of dramatic poetry would require a volume in itself, yet only a brief treatment can be accorded it here.

Although English dramas have been written in rhyme, the loftiest and most dignified meter for English dramatic poetry is blank verse. But the blank verse of drama necessarily differs in several respects from that of the epic. The epic, as lofty narrative, relates what has happened, and what certain characters did and said; its style therefore must be stately and uniform. Drama, upon the other hand, is not narrative, but shows us what is happening, and the characters present themselves to us by what they say; for this reason the style of dramatic

blank verse must be *more realistic and varied* than that of heroic poetry.

It would not do to have Caliban, the brutish monster in Shakespeare's drama of "The Tempest," talk like Miranda, the young and beautiful heroine of the same play. Listen to Caliban:

All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him
By inch-meal a disease!

—*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene II.

Miranda's speeches, on the contrary, are full of grace and charm:

I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember
Save, from my glass, mine own, nor have I seen
More that I may call men, than you, good friend,
And my dear father.

—*The Tempest*, Act III, Scene I.

More latitude and irregularity are also allowable in the blank verse of drama than in that of the epic. Here, however, a word of caution is needed:

We must insist on the points made in the chapter on *Irregularities*: that irregularities should proceed from the nature of the subject itself and not from any weakness of the poet; and that the thought must mould the form if the form is to enhance the thought.

But some latitude, we have said, is allowable. For instance, a drama may be interspersed with lyrical pas-

sages. In "The Tempest," Ariel, the dainty spirit, not only sings several songs but in one place speaks in a rhymed lyrical measure:

Before you can say *Come* and *Go*,
And breathe twice; and cry, *So, So*;
Each one, tripping on his toe,
Will be here with mop and mowe:
Do you love me, master? No?

—Act IV, Scene I.

A poetic drama may also be *interspersed with prose passages*, a thing which would be quite impossible in an epic. Shakespeare's scenes of buffoonery are often written in prose.

The Dramatic Pause, a virtuous irregularity, which drops a syllable, may be used when the necessary rhetorical pause after an exclamation by a speaker would fill out the line.

I think I hear them—Stand! who's there?

—*Hamlet*, Act I, Scene I.

Here the actor pauses to listen after the words "hear them." He pauses again after the exclamation "Stand!" and these two pauses fill out the time of the line.

Again, the dramatic pause may be used when the thought or emotion requires a pause. Bernardo, in the first scene of "Hamlet," relates his encounter with the ghost and says:

When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

and Marcellus exclaims,

Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!
—Act I Scene I.

Here one speaker interrupts the other and the line is left broken off.

For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?
—*Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II.

Here the speaker pauses to consider his thought and the thought is emphasized by the pause.

Feminine Endings, or double endings, constitute another variant used in dramatic blank verse. It is a species of irregularity whereby an extra syllable is added at the end of each line when it would normally end without it.

Let's dry our eyes and thus far hear me, Crom | well;
And,—when I am forgotten, as I shall | be;
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no men | tion
Of me more must be heard of,—say I taught | thee.
—*King Henry VIII*, Act III, Scene II.

Light Endings are those which terminate with personal and relative pronouns, or auxiliaries, such as *I, they, thou,*

am, are, be, can, which admit of being followed by a slight pause.

But O, how oddly will it sound that I
Must ask my child forgiveness!

—*The Tempest*, Act V, Scene I.

Weak Endings are prepositions and conjunctions like *for, from, if, of, or*, which allow no pause after them.

—"for

In those unfledged days was my wife a girl."

—*A Winter's Tale*, Act I, Scene II.

End-Stopped Lines, in dramatic blank verse, are those which are complete in themselves, and which terminate, therefore, either with a considerable pause or as a complete sentence. In Shakespeare's early plays we find that his thought had a tendency to be bound by the unit of the line, as was the case with the blank verse of Surrey, and we therefore find a much larger proportion of end-stopped lines in his earlier than in his later plays.

Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits;
Consider who the king your father sends;
To whom he sends; and what's his embassy:

—*Love's Labor's Lost*, Act II, Scene I.

Run-On Lines are those in which the sense is carried on without pause to the succeeding lines, the sentence running, therefore, to its logical close.

Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world.

—*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII.

Shakespeare will remain the English mine of wealth for the student of the poetic drama, yet no student of blank verse can afford to neglect Milton. For varied specimens of the beautiful use of this meter, let him read Keats's "Hyperion," Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," Tennyson's "Idyls of the King," and "Ulysses," and Browning's "The Ring and the Book."

As for present-day progress in the poetic drama, the recent notable revival of interest in a domain of poetry which so long remained unattempted, is a significant and encouraging fact, the dramas of Mr. Stephen Phillips being especially noble efforts in a high cause, and well worthy of study.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. In what respects does blank verse in the drama differ from that in the epic?
2. Write a few lines in blank verse, introducing exclamations, questions and invectives, and experiment with pauses of different duration, noting the increased or decreased emphasis, and the effect upon the rhythm.
3. What constitutes a weak ending to a line?
4. Is a weak ending ever desirable?

5. Why are many consecutive end-stopped lines to be avoided?

6. Make a list of as many varieties of dramatic blank-verse couplets as you can, giving examples of each. Any group of two lines will serve as a couplet for this purpose.

7. Using only a summary, like Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," write one of the speeches made by a leading character in one of the Comedies, using about twenty lines. Follow Shakespeare's meter.

8. Do the same for one of the tragedies.

9. Recast one of these, using at least half end-stopped lines.

10. From Shakespeare, give examples of all the characteristics of dramatic blank verse referred to in this chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ODE

From the time of Drummond of Hawthornden to our own, some of the noblest flights of English poetry have been taken on the wings of this verse; but with ordinary readers it has been more or less discredited by the far greater number of abortive efforts, on the part sometimes of considerable poets, to adapt it to purposes with which it has no expressional correspondence; or to vary it by rhythmical movements which are destructive of its character.

—COVENTRY PATMORE, Prefatory Note to *The Unknown Eros*.

Perhaps no form of verse has suffered more at the hands of English poets than the ode. The Greek Pindaric ode, —the ode made famous by Pindar—was intended to be accompanied by music and dancing, and the poet who wrote the words usually composed the music too. The Pindaric ode was divided into strophe, antistrophe, and epode. The strophe and antistrophe were always identical in structure and were sung to the same tune; in the strophe the chorus moved from a given spot on the stage to the right; in the antistrophe they moved to the left, thus retracing their steps. The epode varied from the other two sections, both in choral movement and in music, and was sung by the chorus standing still. Ben Jonson introduced the Pindaric ode into England and carefully followed the classical form, although he found few imitators. We give the following interesting and curious

example by Ben Jonson (1629). As will be seen, its several parts are of unequal merit.

A PINDARIC ODE ON THE DEATH OF SIR H. MORISON

The Strophe, or Turn

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear.

A lily of a day
Is fairer far, in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light,
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

The Antistrophe, or Counter-turn

Call, noble Lucius, then for wine,
And let thy looks with gladness shine;
Accept this garland, plant it on thy head,
And think, nay know, thy Morison's not dead.

He leap'd the present age,
Possess'd with holy rage,
To see that bright eternal day;
Of which we priests and poets say
Such truths as we expect for happy men:
And there he lives with memory, and Ben.

The Epode, or Stand

Jonson, who sung this of him, ere he went,
Himself, to rest,
Or taste a part of that full joy he meant
To have express'd,
In this bright asterism!—
Where it were friendship's schism,
Were not his Lucius long with us to tarry,
To separate these twi-
Lights, the Dioscuri
And keep the one half from his Harry.
But fate doth so alternate the design,
Whilst that in heaven, this light on earth must shine.

Gray's "Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard" follow the regular Pindaric form.

Cowley introduced what he called Pindaric odes, but he misunderstood the Greek structure, for he and his many imitators seemed to think that an ode consisted in a bombastic poem with lines of irregular length, and rhymes at irregular intervals; but even in spite of this license he complains of the difficulties of the form and compares it to a Pegasus who

"will no unskilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure."

Another class of odes is imitated from the choral odes of the Greek drama.

Edmund Gosse says that the ode is "Any strain of

enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme." The lines are iambic, of varying length, and "the license to rhyme at indefinite intervals is counter-balanced by unusual frequency in the recurrence of the same rhyme." The varying length of line should indicate the changing feeling of the poem, the deeper and severer portions being written in the longer lines, the lighter thoughts in the shorter meters.

Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" is considered the noblest English example of the irregular form. We give the opening stanza, but the whole ode should be read and studied, particularly for the appropriateness of its varying meters.

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore,—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more!

Read in this connection Dryden's "Song for Saint Cecilia's Day," and "Alexander's Feast;" and Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington."

There is a large group of very beautiful so-called odes in English, which are really lofty lyrics with a regular

stanzaic form. Such are Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," and the odes of Keats, notably the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to the Nightingale."

An ode should be noble in theme and treatment, stately without pedantry, beautiful without redundant ornament. It should be a sustained flight at a high altitude, and it is perhaps not to be regretted, in view of these requirements, that the form is somewhat out of fashion, for a commonplace ode is the most banal and unnecessary of productions.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Is an ode in your opinion the most dignified vehicle for the expression of exalted thought? Give your reasons.

2. What is a strophe? Explain its origin.

3. Could an ode be properly written in trochaic verse?

4. By what marks do you recognize an ode?

5. Name a good ode not mentioned in this chapter.

6. Analyze it for subject matter.

7. Analyze it for form.

8. Does an ode ever embody an epic tale?

9. Give two original subjects for odes.

10. Write the beginning of an ode in irregular form upon a theme that seems to you suitable to be cast in that form.

NOTE: Exercise 10 may be expanded at will so as to include a completed ode.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BALLAD

The narrative of the communal ballad is full of leaps and omissions; the style is simple to a fault; the diction is spontaneous and free. Assonance frequently takes the place of rhyme, and a word often rhymes with itself. There is a lack of poetic adornment in the style quite as conspicuous as the lack of reflection and moralizing in the matter. Metaphor and simile are rare and when found are for the most part standing phrases common to all the ballads; there is never poetry for poetry's sake.—F. B. GUMMERE, *The Ballad*, Warner Library.

The ballad originally was a narrative poem in lyric form with no known individual authorship, having been preserved to us by oral tradition. As a poetic form it is well worth studying, not alone for its narrative and poetic interest but for its vigor, picturesque quality, and spontaneity. The true ballad, of course, is a finished chapter, but modern imitations now and then appear.

The ballad-meter of England and Scotland was taken in imitation from the *septenary*, a rhymed Latin hymn meter of seven feet, or accents. Ballads therefore were originally written in long lines, as in the following, which has been slightly modernized in spelling:

THE ANCIENT BALLAD OF CHEVY CHASE

The Persé out of Northumberlande, and a vowe to God
mayde he

That he wolde hunte in the mountayns of Chyviat within
days three.

These long lines, technically known as *fourteens* as they often numbered fourteen syllables, were afterwards broken up into stanzas of four short lines of iambic tetrameter alternated with trimeter, which accounts for the two unrhymed lines in our modern versions.

FAIR ANNIE OF LOCHROYAN

Tak' down, tak' down, the mast o' goud;
Set up the mast o' tree;
Ill sets it a forsaken lady
To sail sae gallantlie.

Tak' down, tak' down, the sails o' silk;
Set up the sails o' skin;
Ill sets the outside to be gay,
Whan there's sic grief within!

This now forms our modern *ballad measure*. It must be noted, however, that the iambus is often freely mingled with other feet, chiefly the anapæst, so that it is not always easy to scan the ballad in iambic feet.

Ballad poetry makes effective use of repetition and contrast as is shown in the above example.

One of the most dramatic of the old ballads is the gruesome "Edward, Edward," a dialogue between mother and son in which the mother finally worms from the young man the admission that he has killed his father at her instigation.

Quhy dois zour brand sae drop wi bluid,
Edward, Edward?
Quhy dois zour brand sae drop wi bluid
And quhy sae sad gang zee O?
O, I hae kill'd my hauke sae guid,
Mither, Mither,
O, I hae kill'd my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee, O.

Ballads, like all folk poetry, make large use of the *refrain*, or *burden*. They were chanted or "lilted" by one person, and the recurrent refrain gave opportunity for the bystanders to join in the chorus. Sometimes it referred to the subject of the ballad and sometimes it did not. This feature has been successfully imitated in the ballads of some modern poets. Rossetti, a true lover of the ballad form, uses three refrains in "Sister Helen." Kingsley uses an irregular refrain in "The Sands of Dee." Macaulay, in his spirited "Ivry," uses the characteristic ballad repetition.

A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand
spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind the
snow-white crest.

The fact that a thousand knights would have *two* thousand spurs, does not impair the vigor of the verse. The recurrence of the words, "King Henry of Navarre" at the end of each stanza has the effect of a refrain.

In this connection, study some of the great chants of the Bible, like "The Song of Moses and the Children of Israel," in the 15th chapter of Exodus, where Miriam sings the refrain:

"Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea;"

and the Song of Deborah (Judges V), the Song of Hannah (I Samuel II), and its echo in the *Magnificat*. (St. Luke: 1:46.)

Tennyson's "Lady Clare," and Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus," are beautiful examples of the modern ballad, and Kipling has breathed new life into the old form in many a spirited poem.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. How many metrical feet compose the usual ballad line?
2. How does any ballad you may select differ from a selected short-story?
3. Tell the story of an old English ballad in a brief prose paragraph.
4. Select a short-story and narrate it in ballad form. Be careful to adopt a suitable meter.
5. Give three themes suitable for modern ballads—these themes need not be original, but may be suggested by current stories.
6. Write the prose outline for a short ballad, using some current event of romantic interest.

7. Take an episode from Homer or Virgil and recast it in ballad form.

8. How would you account for the fact that the functions of the early ballad are now nearly always entrusted to prose narrative?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LYRIC

However skilled the singer, quality and charm are inborn. Something of them, therefore, always graces the folk-songs of a peasantry, the ballads and songs, let us say, of Ireland and Scotland. Theirs is the wilding flavor which Lowell detects:—

“Sometimes it is
A leafless wilding shivering by the wall;
But I have known when winter barberries
Pricked the effeminate palate with surprise
Of savor whose mere harshness seemed divine.”

When to this the artist-touch is added, then the wandering, uncapturable movement of the pure lyric—more beautiful for its breaks and studied accidentals and most effective discords—is ravishing indeed: at last you have the poet's poetry that is supernal. Its pervading quintessence is like the sheen of flame upon a glaze in earth or metal. Form, color, sound, unite and in some mysterious way become lambent with delicate or impassioned meaning. Here beauty is most intense. Charm is the expression of its expression, the measureless under-vibration, the thrill within the thrill. We catch from its suggestion the very impulse of the lyrist; we are given the human tone, the light of the eye, the play of feature,—all, in fine, which shows the poet in the poem and makes it his and not another's.—EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN, *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*.

A lyric originally meant a song fit to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre, but in modern usage it has come to have a broader meaning, for many lyrics are not songs at all. The lyric may be defined as *any short*,

spontaneous personal poem which is musical in form and expressive of a single complete idea.

The several points of this definition will need some explanation and illustration.

Characteristics of the Lyric

Brevity.—Poe probably had the lyric in mind when he made his famous dictum that there could not be a good long poem. Certainly it would be tiresome to prolong a personal poetic expression, and impossible to do so were the lyric properly confined to a highly unified theme. In nothing do young poets err more than in allowing their productions too great a length. For the purpose of determining current usage, it is decidedly worth while to make a careful study of the six or eight magazines which seek to print the best verse obtainable—and to keep well within the average length, which will be found to be less than twenty-four lines.

Spontaneity and Personality.—As illustrating particularly these joint qualities, examine the following verses by Sir Richard Lovelace. They have been called a perfect lyric.

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind,
To war and arms I flee.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honor more.

Louise Imogen Guiney, herself a lyric poet of sweetness and power, in her "Footnote to a Famous Lyric" sings of the foregoing poem:

And till your strophe sweet and bold,
So lovely aye, so lonely long,
Love's self outdo, dear Lovelace! hold
The pinnacles of song.

Lovelace's charming lyric is not only supposed to express the author's personal feelings, but it expresses them in such a spontaneous manner as to make the poem seem an unpremeditated outburst of the heart. And indeed such has been the origin of many famous lyrics. In thinking of this most popular type of poetry this point must not be obscured—the lyric is, really or apparently, a spontaneous expression of one's self, just as dramatic poetry is an expression of the souls of others.

Musical Quality.—What other forms soever may be rough and irregular, the prosperity of the lyric lies so largely in its melodious flow that music has fixed its very name.

After our studies thus far, it will be patent that the musical qualities of the lyric live in a collocation of smooth-sounding words, grouped in lines of flowing rhythm—that is, pleasing sounds in pleasing motion.

Tennyson greatly admired the music of Burns's lyric quoted below, and said he wished that he had written it.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Though the lyric must be musical, it need not necessarily be rhymed. This Tennyson proved in his famous songs in "The Princess": "Come down O maid," "Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white," "O Swallow, Swallow," and the following:

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Lamb's "The Old, Familiar Faces," is another beautiful example of the 'unrhymed lyric.

Unity.—A careful examination of the lyrical verse thus far quoted will be enough to show how unified and

complete the lyric must be. To introduce complexity is to deprive it of one of its charms—simplicity.

A good lyric is probably the most exquisite and poignant example of the poet's art, but although it is difficult to write good ones, it is unfortunately only too easy to write bad ones. Perhaps, though, it is not really difficult to write good ones, but rather, as Victor Hugo said, "Either very easy, or impossible."

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

NOTE: The student should copy or clip from books and magazines and daily papers lyrics that appeal to him, collecting them in a scrap book for study and reference. Memorize the best lyrics of Shakespeare, Lovelace, Shelley, Keats, Burns and other masters of the art. Later, give attention to present-day lyrists.

1. Put in writing your own definition of a lyric.
2. What is the radical difference between lyrical and dramatic poetry?
3. Name a lyric that you are fond of and, so far as possible, analyze its charm for you.
4. Write—with all the care possible—lyrics upon variations of the new-old themes of love, and springtide joy, striving to make each poem definite and simple, and do not run the gamut of the passions within the limits of a single lyric. Keep your lyric short, and when you have polished it until you see no fault in it, put it away and forget it—later, begin the process of polishing anew.
5. Make a list of three original lyric themes.
6. Select one, and write a lyric. Aim at compression and perfection, writing quickly under inspiration, but

labor on it later with the patience of a diamond cutter. A lyric should not be considered finished until the change of any single word would mar it. Remember this important injunction: *do not allow yourself to use a single irregularity unless you do so purposely, with a view to added effectiveness. Irregularities that you "can't help" are defects.*

7. Name six themes, not necessarily original, that seem to you to fuse naturally into lyric form.

8. Do any of the following themes lend themselves to lyrical utterance? Which do not? Say why: Love, Friendship, Hate, Joy, Despair, Faith, Music, Memories of Home.

9. Take two of the foregoing themes and by narrowing them, that is, by limiting them to a single and personally important phase, formulate lyrical themes.

10. Name three themes that would seem ill suited for lyrical treatment.

11. Write a lyric upon a theme of fire—the phase that most appeals to you, as the Camp-fire, or the Sun, limiting it to sixteen lines.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SONNET

It is generally agreed that *sonnet* is an abbreviation of the Italian *sonnetto*, a short strain (literally, a little sound), that word being the diminutive of *suono*=sound. The *sonnetto* was originally a poem recited with sound, that is, with a musical accompaniment, a short poem of the *rispetto* kind, sung to the strains of lute or mandolin.

—WILLIAM SHARP, *Sonnets of This Century*.

The sonnet is an Italian form of verse consisting of a poem of fourteen lines, the arrangement of which is governed by artificial and arbitrary rules. It appeared in Italy at the beginning of the 12th Century, and the laws then formulated for its composition have been observed there since the time of Petrarch (14th Century). The form, however, was not used in England until the reign of Henry the Eighth, in the second century succeeding, when Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced it by translating one of Petrarch's sonnets into English. Wyatt left some thirty-two sonnets and all but one followed the Italian model.

Sonnet-writing was an accomplishment cultivated by the great and noble, and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Sir Philip Sidney, were the next two English sonnet-eers. Although these pioneers were familiar with the Italian structure of inter-lacing rhymes, a simpler system crept in and became current, but this contained nothing

of the Italian sonnet-form except the original scheme of fourteen lines. This new type was adopted by Shakespeare, who set the seal of his genius upon it. Nevertheless, the so-called *English or Shakespearean sonnet* is, strictly speaking, not a sonnet at all, but a poem composed of three quatrains and a couplet. The beauty of Shakespeare's sonnets consists, not in their rhyme-scheme, but in their imagery and choice of words.

- Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (a)
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate: (b)
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, (a)
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date: (b)
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, (c)
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd: (d)
 And every fair from fair sometime declines, (c)
 By chance, or Nature's changing course, untrimm'd. (d)
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade (e)
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest; (f)
 Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade, (e)
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest. (f)
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, (g)
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (g)

—SHAKESPEARE.

You notice in the foregoing example the arrangement of three quatrains, or four-line stanzas, each containing two rhymes, and the final couplet, containing one rhyme, making a fourth division, which comes like an epilogue, or a commentary on what has gone before. The Shakespearean sonnet, then, contains seven rhymes.

Now *the Petrarchian, legitimate, or Italian sonnet* is entirely different. It contains but two sections instead of four, and but four or at most five rhymes, instead of seven; nor does it close with a couplet.

The first section consists of eight lines and is called the octave. It has but two rhymes, which, as we shall see, vary in order according to the particular sonnet-form.

The second section consists of six lines and is called the sestet. It may have either two or three rhymes.

There are two regular ways of arranging the rhymes of the octave. The first and better way is *Enclosed Rhyme*, which runs *a, b, b, a, a, b, b, a*, and is illustrated in Rossetti's sonnet on page 167.

The other arrangement is that of *Alternate Rhyme*, which runs *a, b, a, b, a, b, a, b*. It is seldom used.

SONNET FROM ASTROPHEL AND STELLA (before 1582?)

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show, (a)
 That she, dear she! might take some pleasure of my
 pain: (b)
 Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make
 her know, (a)
 Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain: (b)
 I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe, (a)
 Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain: (b)
 Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow (a)
 Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burn'd
 brain. (b)

In the arrangement of the rhymes of the sestet more latitude is allowed, though the most usual order is alternate rhyme, *c, d, c, d, c, d*, if two rhymes are employed as in the foregoing, or *c, d, e, c, d, e*, if three rhymes are used, as in Longfellow's "A Nameless Grave," which is given farther on.

In the best and most regular models there is a definite division both of sound and sense at the end of the octave, and therefore some poets prefer, as Rossetti often chose, to leave a space of one line between the octave and the sestet. Other poets, Matthew Arnold for example, occasionally separate the octave into two quatrains, while still others divide the sestet into two equal stanzas.

A sonnet should embody a single theme or idea, which should be presented in the octave, with the application made in the sestet.

Think thou and act; tomorrow thou shalt die. (a)

Out-stretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore, (b)

Thou say'st; "Man's measured path is all gone o'er: (b)

Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh, (a)

Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I, (a)

Even I, am he whom it was destined for." (b)

How should this be? Art thou then so much more (b)

Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby? (a)

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound (c)

Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me; (d)

Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd, (c)

Miles and miles distant though the last line be, (d)

And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—(c)
 Still, leagues beyond those leagues there is more sea. (d)

—ROSSETTI.

This is a noble and impressive sonnet; it is absolutely regular in form and beautifully illustrates what we have just said—the octave contains the proposition, the application is made in the sestet. The octave is written in enclosed rhyme, and contains but two rhymes, while the sestet is written with alternate rhyme, and also contains two.

The greatest two English poets of the Nineteenth Century, Tennyson and Browning, did not excel in the sonnet. Of those which Tennyson cared to preserve, only one, "Montenegro," is of the first class. Browning wrote very few, none of them noteworthy.

The American poet, Longfellow, with a slenderer poetic equipment than either of these great contemporaries, excelled them both in the use of the sonnet. Perhaps his familiarity with Italian made him sensitive to the subtle beauties of the sonnet form. Longfellow's sonnets are among the finest of his poems and are worthy to stand with the most exquisite in the language. Let us read one of them:

A NAMELESS GRAVE

"A soldier of the Union mustered out,"	(a)
Is the inscription on an unknown grave	(b)
At Newport News, beside the salt sea wave,	(b)
Nameless and dateless; sentinel or scout	(a)
Shot down in skirmish, or disastrous rout	(a)

- Of battle, when the loud artillery drave (b)
 Its iron wedges through the ranks of brave (b)
 And doomed battalions, storming the redout. (a)
 Thou unknown hero sleeping by the sea (c)
 In thy forgotten grave! with secret shame (d)
 I feel my pulses beat, my forehead burn, (e)
 When I remember thou hast given for me (c)
 All that thou hadst, thy life, thy very name, (d)
 And I can give thee nothing in return. (e)

—LONGFELLOW.

Notice the noble simplicity and clarity of this sonnet. You see that the subject is stated in the octave and that the application is made in the sestet. The octave is written in enclosed rhyme and the sestet has three rhymes, arranged *c, d, e, c, d, e*. This sonnet has also great excellence in its contrasting terminal vowel sounds.

We notice that all these examples, Shakespeare's included, are written in ten-syllable lines with the accent falling on the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th syllables. In other words they are written in iambic pentameter. Some authorities say that a sonnet *must* be in iambic pentameter. This need not invariably be the case. Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet, reproduced on page 166, is in twelve-syllable lines, and Swinburne has given us a spirited sonnet written in eleven- and twelve-syllable lines in his

NELL GWYN

- Sweetheart, that no taint of the throne or the stage (a)
 Could touch with unclean transformation, or alter (b)

To the likeness of courtiers whose consciences falter (b)
 At the smile or the frown, at the mirth or the rage, (a)
 Of a master whom chance could inflame or assuage, (a)
 Our Lady of Laughter, invoked in no psalter, (b)
 Adored of no faithful that cringe and that palter, (b)
 Praise be with thee yet from a hag-ridden age. (a)
 Our Lady of Pity thou wast; and to thee (c)
 All England, whose sons are the sons of the sea, (c)
 Gives thanks, and will hear not if history snarls (d)
 When the name of the friend of her sailors is spoken: (e)
 And thy lover she cannot but love—by the token (e)
 That thy name was the last on the lips of King Charles. (d)

—SWINBURNE.

The following also contains an interesting variation of rhyming order followed in the sestet—a variation condemned by the purist:

THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
 Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
 In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
 Where that Ægean isle forgets the main,
 And only the low lutes of love complain,
 And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
 As such an one were glad to know the brine
 Salt on his lips, and the large air again,—
 So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
 Men turn, and see the stars and feel the free
 Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
 And, through the music of the languid hours,

They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

—ANDREW LANG.

To sonnet lovers, the names of Milton and Wordsworth stand out preëminent. Milton's sonnets are magnificent, lofty in thought, stately and sonorous in expression. He followed the Italian model but did not care to observe the division between the octave and the sestet. Wordsworth's best sonnets are among his finest poems, but he wrote many which are more or less commonplace. However, taken all in all, it is safe to say that he wrote more good sonnets than any other English poet since Shakespeare. In form, he allowed himself considerable latitude, sometimes observing the division between octave and sestet, and sometimes not, and occasionally permitting himself an extra rhyme in the octave.

The sonnet has been called the noblest fixed form of English verse. Spenser and Keats tried to vary its structure, but the latter's most beautiful sonnets are regular in form. Shelley, on the other hand, wrote few sonnets, and nearly all are irregular. Drummond of Hawthornden is a poet remembered for his noble sonnets.

Sonnet Sequences, or a group of more or less closely connected sonnets, have been written by a number of English poets. Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Rossetti, and Mrs. Browning wrote famous groups of this sort, and Wordsworth's "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty" may be considered another example.

A *Crown of Sonnets* was an Italian conceit. In this

arrangement the last line of each sonnet became the first line of the succeeding one, and the concluding line of the last sonnet was the same as the opening line of the first.

Sonnets on the sonnet have been written by many poets; we give several of the most famous, beginning with the sestet from Theodore Watts-Dunton's "The Sonnet's Voice," because it includes the theory of the sonnet:

A sonnet is a wave of melody:

From heaving waters of the impassioned soul

A billow of tidal music one and whole

Flows in the octave; then, returning free,

Its ebbing surges in the sestet roll

Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.

THE SONNET

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—

Memorial from the Soul's eternity

To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,

Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,

Of its own arduous fulness reverent:

Carve it in ivory or in ebony,

As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see

Its flowering crest impearl'd and orient.

A Sonnet is a coin; its face reveals

The soul,—its converse, to what power 'tis due:—

Whether for tribute to the august appeals

Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,

It serve: or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,

In Charon's palm it pay the toll of Death.

—ROSSETTI.

SCORN NOT THE SONNET

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just hours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camões soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few.

—WORDSWORTH.

THE SONNET

What is a sonnet? 'Tis the pearly shell
That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea;
A precious jewel carved most curiously:
It is a little picture painted well.
What is a sonnet? 'Tis the tear that fell
From a great poet's hidden ecstasy;
A two-edged sword, a star, a song—ah me!
Sometimes a heavy tolling funeral bell.
This was the flame that shook with Dante's breath;
The solemn organ whereon Milton played,
And the clear glass where Shakespeare's shadow falls:

A sea this is—beware who ventureth!
For like a fiord the narrow floor is laid
Mid-ocean deep to the sheer mountain walls.
—RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

In making a study of this fascinating poetic type, read Milton's "Sonnet on His Blindness," Wordsworth's "On Westminster Bridge," and "The World is too much with us," Keats's "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," Mrs. Browning's "How do I love Thee? Let me count the Ways," Gilder's "My love for thee doth march like armed men," and "I count my time by times that I meet thee."

Practise sonnet writing. It is not difficult to gain the needed facility of rhyme, but after you have closed with a trite and hackneyed figure, take up at random a sonnet of Milton or of Wordsworth, and note the dignity of its phrase and the richness of its figures. Take, for instance, this vigorous passage from Mrs. Browning:

As if a ship-wrecked Pagan, safe in Port,
His guardian sea-god to commemorate,
Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills a-snort,
And vibrant tail, within the temple-gate.

The sonnet writer must be willing to take pains. The great master of the sonnet, Petrarch, wrote in a letter to a friend, "The courier knocks at my door but I prefer to send him away empty rather than publish things at which I should afterwards blush. Could I like you write verses by the thousand I would not do so, unless the rhythm were rigorously accurate, unless they had a certain poetical

charm, unless they diffused a light capable of raising and edifying the mind;" and in a devout Latin note to one of his sonnets he says, "I began this by the impulse of the Lord, 10th September, at the dawn of day, after my morning prayers."

In conclusion, it will be well to notice Leigh Hunt's old rules of the sonnet, which a recent writer in *The Century* said should be reprinted by every magazine in the country.

Rules of the Italian Sonnet¹

"The sonnet, then, in order to be a perfect work of art, and make no compromise with a difficulty, must in the first place be a Legitimate Sonnet after the proper Italian fashion; that is to say, with but two rhymes to the octave and not more than three in the sestet.

"Secondly, it must confine itself to the one leading idea, thought, or feeling.

"Thirdly, it must treat this one leading idea, thought, or feeling in such a manner as to leave in the reader's mind no sense of irrelevancy or insufficiency.

"Fourthly, it must not have a speck of obscurity.

"Fifthly, it must not have a forced rhyme.

"Sixthly, it must not have a superfluous word.

"Seventhly, it must not have a word too little; that is to say, an omission of a word or words, for the sake of convenience.

"Eighthly, it must not have a word out of its place.

"Ninthly, it must have no very long word, or any other

¹ Leigh Hunt, "The Book of the Sonnet."

that tends to lessen the number of accents, and so weaken the verse.

"Tenthly, its rhymes must be properly varied and contrasted and not beat upon the same vowel,—a fault too common with very good sonnets. It must not say, for instance, *rhyme, tide, abide, crime*; or *play, game, refrain, way*; but contrast *i* with *o*, or with some other strongly opposed vowel and treat every vowel on the same principle.

"Eleventhly, its music throughout, must be as varied as it is suitable; more or less strong, or sweet, according to the subject; but never weak or monotonous, unless monotony itself be the effect intended.

"Twelfthly, it must increase, or, at all events, not decline in interest, to its close.

"Lastly, the close must be equally impressive and unaffected; not epigrammatic, unless where the subject warrants it, or where point of that kind is desirable; but simple, conclusive, and satisfactory; strength being paramount, where such elevation is natural, otherwise on a level with the serenity; flowing in calmness, or grand in the manifestation of power withheld."

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Which of the several forms of sonnets outlined in this chapter is in your opinion the best? Give your reasons.
2. What is the rhyme-scheme of the Italian sonnet? This should be memorized by every student.
3. Do you consider a sonnet an especially difficult poem to construct? Why?

4. Name the three poets generally considered to be the best sonneteers in English verse.

5. Write out the rhyme-schemes of at least three sonnet-forms.

6. Map out in skeleton form several sonnets with euphonious, contrasting rhymes placed at the ends of fourteen lines otherwise blank.

7. Which line of a good sonnet would naturally be the first to arise in the mind of the poet?

8. Rewrite any good lyric in sonnet form.

9. Rewrite any of the sonnets given in this volume, and change the rhyme-schemes.

10. Write upon a modern theme a sonnet in the Italian pattern.

11. Write a sonnet in any pattern you prefer.

CHAPTER XX

IMITATIONS OF CLASSICAL METERS

The advantages of the more numerous versification of the ancients.

—LEIGH HUNT, *What is Poetry?*

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man,

—TENNYSON, *To Virgil*.

Professed imitations of Greek rhythm in English poetry seem to me to have gone practically always on quite wrong lines. They ought to have been more intensely rhythmical than the average; as a matter of fact, they think they are being Greek when they lose lyrical rhythm altogether.

—GILBERT MURRAY, *What English Poetry may still Learn from Greek*.

As we have already said in Chapter IV, the classical rules of quantity were different from the accentual laws of English verse. It is therefore not only difficult, but almost impossible to reproduce in English the effect of Greek or Latin meters. There are two classes of such attempts: first, those that endeavor more or less exactly to follow the classical rules of quantity depending on long and short syllables; second, those that frankly employ accented syllables in place of the long ones in the original. Those that follow the classical rules are more difficult to read according to English rhythm, and they are also less pleasing to the average English ear.

1. Hexameters

Dactylic Hexameter is the meter most often attempted in imitation. It was used for heroic or epic poetry. It consisted of six feet, the first four being either dactyls or spondees, the fifth ordinarily a dactyl (but occasionally a spondee, when the line was called a spondaic verse), and the sixth and last always a spondee or a trochee.

It is almost impossible to follow this rule in English, because there are practically no natural spondees in the English language. (A spondee was a foot consisting of two long, or equally accented, syllables). Therefore, there is usually a preponderance of dactyls in English hexameters, making the meter lighter and more tripping than the original, and trochees are often substituted for spondees.

Poe, after a scathing denunciation of the hexameters of some of his contemporaries, goes on to say, however, that he will not admit that a truly Greek hexameter cannot be composed in English and offers the following as an example:

Dó tell! | when may we | hópe to make | mén of sense |
 out of the | Púndits |
 Bórn and brought | úp with their | snóuts déep | dówn
 in the | múd of the | Fróg-pond? |
 Why ásk? | Whó ever | yét sáw | móney made | out
 of a | fat old |
 Jew, ór | dównright | úpright | nútmégs | out of a |
 píne-knot? |

He maintains that the "proper spondee predominance is here preserved." But English writers are content with one or two, what we might call, imitation spondees in a line. They are always careful, however, to have their fifth foot a dactyl, and their last foot a foot of two syllables, although it is usually a trochee.

Coleridge gives us an example of this meter in the following translation from Schiller:

Strongly it | bears us a | long in | swelling and | limitless |
 billows, |
 Nothing be | fore and | nothing be | hind but the | sky
 and the | ocean. |

And in an epistle to Wordsworth he says:

And as I live you will see my hexameters trotting before
 you,
 This is a galloping measure, a hop, and a trot, and a gallop.

Walter Savage Landor writes on the same subject:

Askest thou if in my youth I have mounted, as others
 have mounted,
 Galloping Hexameter, Pentameter cantering after?

* * *

Much as old meters delight me, 'tis only where first they
 were nurtured,
 In their own clime, their own speech; than pamper them
 here, I would rather
 Tie up my Pegasus tight to the scanty-fed rack of a sonnet.

Longfellow used this measure in "The Children of the Lord's Supper" and in "Evangeline." We may divide the opening lines of the latter poem into feet as follows:

This is the | forest pri | méval. The | murmuring |
 pines and the | hémlócks |
 Bearded with | móss and in | gárments | gréen, indi- |
 stinct in the | twilíght, |
 Stand líke | Drúids of | éld, wíth | vóices | sad and
 pro | phétic, |
 Stand líke | hárpers | hóar, wíth | beards thát | rest
 on their | bósoms. |

Elegiac Meter, which is very rarely used today, consists of a dactylic hexameter line followed by a dactylic pentameter.

This pentameter is unusual in being composed of two sections of two and a half feet each. There are two whole feet, then a single long syllable, followed by the *cæsura*, or pause; then two more feet, followed by a long syllable. Coleridge imitates it in this translation from Schiller:

In the hex | ámeter | rises the | fountáin's | sílvery |
 column |

In the pen | támeter | áye '' | fálling in | mélody | back ''.

The *cæsural* pause is marked ''.

Tennyson gives us the following *quantitative* example of elegiacs. That is, the long syllables are really long, or are arbitrarily made so.

Thése láme | héxame | térs, thé | stróng-wingéd |
 músic of | Hómér? |
 Nô—but a | móst búr | lésque " | bárbárous | expéri |
 mént. |

To which one might respond:

When was harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses in Eng-
 land?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?

2. Lyrical Measures

Hendecasyllabics, or eleven syllable verse, is composed of a spondee, a dactyl and three trochees.

Ó yóu | chórus of | ín-do | lént re | víewers, |
 Írré | spon-sible, | ín-do | lént re | víewers, |
 Look, Í | cóme to the | tést, a | tíny | póem, |
 Áll cóm | pósed in a | méter | of Ca | túllus; |
 Áll ín | quan-tity, | cáreful | of my | mótion, |
 Líke thé | skáter on | íce that | hárdly | béars him, |
 Lést I | fall una | wares be | fore the | people, |
 Wáking | láughter in | ín-do | lént re | víewers. |

—TENNYSON, *Hendecasyllabics*.

Alcaics, named from the poet Alcæus, are of several kinds. In one, the line is made up of either a spondee or an iambus, then a long syllable, and two dactyls; in another, it consists of two dactyls and two trochees. Tennyson uses the latter form in his poem on Milton, beginning with a single syllable, then two trochees and two dactyls. Note that the third line contains three trochees, and that the last line reverses the order of the feet of the first two lines, beginning with two dactyls and ending with two trochees:

O | migh^ˈty | moun^ˈth'd in | ven^ˈtor of | har^ˈmonics, |
 O | skill'd to | sing of | Time or E | ternity, |
 God- | gift^ˈed | organ- | voice of | Eng^ˈland, |
 Mil^ˈton a | name to re | sound for | ages; |
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean,
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset!

Sapphics were named from the poetess Sappho. A Sapphic line consists of eleven syllables or five feet, the first a trochee, the second a spondee, the third a dactyl, and the fourth and fifth trochees. Three of these lines are followed by a line of five syllables consisting of a dactyl and a spondee.

Saw the | white im | placable | Áphro | dite, |
 Saw the | hair un | bound and the | feet un | sandalled |
 Shine as | fire of | sunset on | western | waters; |
 Saw the re | luctant |

Feet, the | straining | plumes of the | doves that | drew
 her |
 Looking | always | looking with | necks re | verted, |
 Back to | Lesbos, | back to the | hills where | under |
 Shone Mity | lené;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
 Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
 As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
 Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
 Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her:
 While behind a clamor of singing women
 Severed the twilight.

—SWINBURNE.

It is apparent that the beauty of this meter is due to the central dactyl, or foot of three syllables. In "The Friend of Humanity and The Knife-Grinder," which is a burlesque of this measure, a dactyl is substituted for the first trochee.

Needy knife-grinder! whither are you going?
 Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order,—
 Bleak blows the blast,—your hat has got a hole in't,
 So have your breeches!

—CANNING AND FRERE.

Choriambic. A choriambus is a foot consisting of a trochee combined with and preceding an iambus. It is therefore a foot of four syllables, the first long, the second and third short, and the fourth long. A choriambic line consists of a spondee, three choriambuses, and an iambus

Lóve, wát | áiled thee to léave | lífe that was máde |
 lóvely, we thóught, | wíth lóve? |
 Wát swéet | vísions of sléep | lúred thee áway, |
 dówn from the líght | ábóve?

What strange faces of dreams, voices that called, hands
 that were raised to wave,

Lured or led thee, alas, out of the sun, down to the sunless
 grave?

—SWINBURNE.

Galliambic. A galliambic line is composed of iambic feet, one of which is catalectic, or drops the final syllable; the next to the last foot is an anapæst, or two short syllables followed by a long one.

So | in íre | she spa'ke | adjúst | ing ' ' dis | uní | tedly then |
 her yóke. |

At | his ówn | rebúke | the lí | on ' ' doth | his heárt |
 to a fu' | ry spur,

With a step, a roar, a bursting, unarrested of any brake.

—ROBINSON ELLIS, *Translation of the Attis*.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

NOTE. The student should not only recognize but understand the functions of all metrical feet found in English verse.

1. Mark the accents of the unmarked lines quoted in this chapter.

2. Copy the following table of accented and unaccented syllables, and keep it by you until you have mastered it.

Iambus:	— —'	Spondee:	—' —'
Trochee:	—' —	Amphibrach:	— —' —
Anapæst:	— — —'	Amphimacer:	—' — —'
Dactyl:	—' — —		

Write it from memory.

3. Write seven rhythmic lines, the first line trochaic, the second line iambic, etc., in illustration of all the metrical feet noted in this table. Of course, these are not to be parts of one stanza.

4. Having become familiar with these technicalities of verse, would you consider it essential to bear them continually in mind during the composition of poetry?

5. Revise one of your former poetic efforts and hand in the revised Ms.

6. Choosing the three most attractive classical forms, write a stanza in each. In imitating a set form it is always good to draft a plan of the meter and follow it carefully.

CHAPTER XXI

FRENCH FORMS

The charm of these strictly written verses is undoubtedly increased by some knowledge of their technical rules. Every quality that poetry demands, whether clearness of thought, elegance of expression, harmonious sound, or faultless rhythm, is needed as much in these shapes as in unfettered verse.—GLEESON WHITE, Introduction to *Ballades and Rondeaux*.

That highten balades, roundels, virelaies.—CHAUCER, *The Legend of Good Women*.

The so-called French forms of artificial verse include many varieties. The most common of these are the Ballade, the Rondeau, the Rondel, the Villanelle, and the Triolet. There are other less usual forms of which the Kyrielle is the simplest, and the Pantoum, the Chant Royal, and the Sestina, the most complicated and difficult.

All these meters share certain characteristics: an arbitrary rhyme-scheme, a limited number of rhymes, and the repetition of a refrain, or of certain lines, or of terminal words. They are excellent practice for the verse-writer, for their frequent use gives ease and flexibility, and should lead to lightness and grace. Perhaps the most attractive of them all is the Ballade.

The Ballade must not be confused with the ballad, which was a simple form of folk-poetry. The Ballade, on the contrary, although it is supposed to have originated in

dance and song, is a most sophisticated and artificial meter, cultivated in old times by court poets, and invariably dedicated to a prince or a patron.

In its most usual form it consists of three eight-line stanzas, with an envoy, or dedication, of four lines at the close. It is sometimes written in three ten-line stanzas with an envoy of five lines, and even nine-line and eleven-line ballades are not unknown. The eight-line stanza, however, is the typical one, and the eight-syllable line the most usual. Three rhymes only are allowed.

The rhyme-scheme of the stanza is *a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c*, and of the envoy, *b, c, b, c*.

The same terminal rhyming word may not be used twice, except of course in the refrain. The refrain forms the last line of each stanza and the last line of the envoy. The sense of each stanza must be continuous, and the refrain should complete the sense naturally and without awkwardness. The refrain should recur each time without any change of word, though a change of emphasis is allowable and even desirable.

The refrain is the corner-stone of a ballade, and as the whole structure rests thereupon, it should be chosen first. The old French poets insisted that the length of the refrain should govern not only the length of the line but also the number of lines in the stanza—that is, that a ten-syllable refrain necessitated a ten-line stanza, and an eight-syllable refrain an eight-line stanza. This latter rule is not observed in modern English practice so accomplished a balladist as Mr. Andrew Lang having written ballades with lines of four, seven, eight, nine, and even eleven

syllables, yet all with the eight-line stanza. The ten-syllable ballade, however, is still usually written with ten lines.

The difficulty of rendering the Ballade in English is caused by the number of rhyming words needed: fourteen of one kind, six of another, and five of another. Ballades with two rhymes are permissible, but the difficulty is then, of course, increased: fourteen rhymes of one kind must be found and eleven of the other.

The envoy (sometimes written *envoi*), or dedication, is the address to the poet's sovereign, or patron, and is the summing up and conclusion of the whole matter, often pointing the moral and adorning the tale.

One of François Villon's ballades has always been a favorite with translators. Andrew Lang's version, which we give, is one of the most pleasing.

BALLADE OF DEAD LADIES

(After Villon)

Nay, tell me now in what strange air
The Roman Flora dwells to-day.
Where Archippiada hides, and where
Beautiful Thais has passed away?
Whence answers Echo, afield, astray,
By mere or stream,—around, below?
Lovelier she than a woman of clay;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where is wise Héloïse, that care
Brought on Abeilard, and dismay?
All for her love he found a snare
A maimed poor monk in orders grey;
And where's the Queen who willed to slay
Buridan, that in a sack must go
Afloat down Seine,—a perilous way—
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where is that White Queen, a lily rare
With her sweet song, the Siren's lay?
Where's Bertha Broad-foot, Beatrice fair?
Alys and Ermengarde, where are they?
Good Joan, whom English did betray
In Rouen town, and burned her? No,
Maiden and Queen, no man may say;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

ENVOY

Prince, all this week thou need'st not pray,
Nor yet this year the thing to know,
One burden answers, ever and aye,
“Nay, but where is the last year's snow?”

Ballade of Ten Lines. In this form, four rhymes are permitted. The envoy should contain five lines, half as many as the stanza. The rhyme order is *a, b, a, b, b, c, c, d, c, d*, in the stanza, and in the envoy, *c, c, d, c, d*.

To show the structure, we quote the first stanza and the envoy of Andrew Lang's translation of “The Ballade of

the Voyage to Cythera," after Theodore de Banville. This ballade follows the rule of ten syllables, ten lines.

I know Cythera long is desolate;
I know the winds have stripp'd the gardens green,
Alas, my friend! Beneath the fierce sun's weight
A barren reef lies where Love's flowers have been,
Nor ever lover on that coast is seen!
So be it, but we seek a fabled shore,
To lull our vague desires with mystic lore,
To wander where Love's labyrinths beguile;
There let us land, there dream forevermore:
"It may be we shall touch the happy isle."

ENVOY

Sad eyes! The blue sea laughs, as heretofore.
Oh! singing birds your happy music pour!
Ah, poets, leave the sordid earth awhile;
Flit to these ancient gods we still adore:
"It may be we shall touch the happy isle!"

The Double Ballade consists of six stanzas of eight or ten lines, using respectively three or four rhymes, necessitating, of course, a double number of rhyming words. It is sometimes written without an envoy.

The Ballade à Double Refrain uses two refrains, one of which occurs as the fourth line of each stanza and as the second line of the envoy, and the other in the ordinary place, as the last line of each stanza and the last line of the envoy. The subjects of the two refrains should be con-

trasted. The following, by Austin Dobson, is an excellent example:

THE BALLADE OF PROSE AND RHYME

(Ballade à Double Refrain)

When the days are heavy with mire and rut,
In November fogs, in December snows,
When the North wind howls, and the doors are shut,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose,
But whenever a scent from the whitethorn blows,
And the jasmine stars at the casement climb
And a Rosalind face at the lattice shows,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,
When the reason stands on its squarest toes,
When the mind (like a beard) has a "formal cut,"—
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
But whenever the May-blood stirs and glows,
And the young year draws to the "golden prime,"
And Sir Romeo sticks in his ear a rose,—
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

In a theme where the thoughts have a pedant-strut,
In a changing quarrel of "Ayes" and "Noes,"
In a starched procession of "If" and "But,"—
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
But whenever a soft glance softer grows
And the light hours dance to the trysting-time,
And the secret is told "that no one knows,"—
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

ENVOY

In the work-a-day world,—for its needs and woes,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose,
But whenever the May bells clash and chime
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

The Rondeau is another delightful form which in the hands of a master yields unexpected beauties. Indeed it may be said to rank next to the sonnet as a short, formal poem. Like the ballade, it is built upon the refrain, which also forms in the rondeau the first half of the first line, or, if a refrain of one word only is used, the first word of the first line; therefore as one author tells us:

Upon a good beginning must be based
A good rondeau.

Voiture, in France, was the chief master of rondeau-writing and since his day the so-called *Rondeau of Voiture* has been its most popular form. It consists of thirteen lines with two rhymes, and an unrhymed refrain which also forms the opening word or words of the first line. The poem is divided into three stanzas. The rhyme-order is *a, a, b, b, a—a, a, b*, and refrain—*a, a, b, b, a* and refrain. The refrain is not counted in the lines of the stanza. It must recur without change of word, but is sometimes given a changed meaning with happy effect. Rondeaux are usually written in eight-syllable lines; however, the following fine example by W. E. Henley, has ten syllables.

WHAT IS TO COME

(Rondeau)

What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good—was good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to bear,
We are the masters of the days that were:
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered—even so.
Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe—
Dear, though it break and spoil us!—need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What is to come.

The Rondeau of Villon is a shorter form. It consists of ten lines with two rhymes and an unrhymed refrain which is used twice—hence twelve lines in all. The rhyme scheme is *a, b, b, a,—a, b*, and refrain, *a, b, b, a*, and refrain.

IN VAIN TODAY

(Rondeau)

In vain today I scrape and blot:
The nimble words, the phrases neat,
Decline to mingle and to meet,
My skill is all forgone, forgot.

He will not canter, walk, or trot,
My Pegasus; I spur, I beat
In vain to-day.

And yet 'twere sure the saddest lot
That I should fail to leave complete
One poor—the rhyme suggests “conceit!”
Alas! 'tis all too clear I'm not
In vein to-day.

—AUSTIN DOBSON.

The Roundel is a variation of the rondeau, invented by Swinburne and used by him with great freedom and dexterity. Its charm consists in its rhyming refrain. The rhyme-order is *a, b, a*, refrain,—*b, a, b*,—*a, b, a*, refrain. Swinburne has written roundels with every imaginable rhythm and with lines varying from four syllables to sixteen. We give the envoi to his “*Century of Roundels*.”

ENVOI

(Roundel)

Fly, white butterflies out to sea,
Frail pale wings for the winds to try,
Small white wings that we scarce can see
Fly.

Here and there may a chance caught eye
Note in a score of you, twain or three
Brighter or darker of tinge or dye.

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
 Some fly soft as a low long sigh,
 All to the haven where each would be
 Fly.

The Rondel. The word *rondel* is merely the old spelling of the French word *rondeau*, but it has come to mean a slightly different form of verse. There are two types of modern rondels. One consists of fourteen lines with two rhymes, usually in the order *a, b, b, a,—a, b, a, b,—a, b, b, a, a, b*, or *a, b, a, b,—b, a, a, b,—a, b, a, b, a, b*. The first two lines are repeated as the seventh and eighth, and again as the thirteenth and fourteenth lines. The effect is, of course, slightly monotonous.

The other and more graceful form drops the fourteenth line, so that although the first line of the poem is repeated three times, the second line occurs only twice, giving more variety and lightness to the verse. We give a specimen of the thirteen-line rondel:

THE WAYS OF DEATH

(Rondel)

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
 And all the words of Death are grave and sweet,
 From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
 She signs to come, and strife and song have been.

A summer night descending cool and green
 And dark, on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
 The ways of death are soothing and serene,
 And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
 And hopeful faces look upon and greet
 This last of all your lover's, and to meet
 Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean.—
 The ways of Death are soothing and serene.

—W. E. HENLEY.

The Rondelet is a diminutive form which is not often used. It consists of seven lines including the refrain, with two rhymes, in the order *a, b, a, a, b, b, a*.

RONDELET

“Which way he went?”
 I know not—how should I go spy
 Which way he went?
 I only know him gone. “Relent?”
 He never will—unless I die!
 And then, what will it signify
 Which way he went?

—MAY PROBYN.

The Rondeau Redoublé has little in common with the rondeau but the name. It consists of six four-line stanzas rhymed alternately on two rhymes, and its intricacy is caused by the use in turn of the four lines of the first stanza as the terminal lines of the four succeeding stanzas. The one feature which it shares with the rondeau (other than its use of two rhymes) is the re-appearance of the first half of the first line as a short concluding line at the end of the poem. This may rhyme or not as the author pleases. An example will best illustrate the structure:

RONDEAU REDOUBLE

My day and night are in my lady's hand;
I have no other sunrise than her sight;
For me her favor glorifies the land;
Her anger darkens all the cheerful light.

Her face is fairer than the hawthorn white,
When all a-flower in May the hedgerows stand;
While she is kind, I know of no affright,
My day and night are in my lady's hand.

All heaven in her glorious eyes is spanned;
Her smile is softer than the summer's night,
Gladder than daybreak on the Faery strand;
I have no other sunrise than her sight.

Her silver speech is like the singing flight
Of runnels rippling o'er the jewelled sand;
Her kiss a dream of delicate delight;
For me her favor glorifies the land.

What if the Winter chase the Summer bland!
The gold sun in her hair burns ever bright,
If she be sad, straightway all joy is banned;
Her anger darkens all the cheerful light.

Come weal or woe, I am my lady's knight
And in her service every ill withstand;
Love is my Lord in all the world's despite
And holdeth in the hollow of his hand
My day and night.

—JOHN PAYNE.

The Villanelle uses two rhymes and consists of six stanzas, five of three lines each, and the last one of four lines. It belongs to the type of rondel and rondeau redoublé in that it gains its effect by the repetition of lines.

The first and last lines of the first stanza re-appear alternately as the last lines of the second, third, fourth, and fifth stanzas, and both together form the two concluding lines of the last stanza. The tercets (groups of three lines) are rhymed *a, b, a*, and the concluding quatrain *a, b, a, a*.

The villanelle was originally supposed to be a shepherd's song and was devoted almost exclusively to pastoral subjects. The following example shows that it can be used for a more dignified theme:

VILLANELLE

The silent stars burn in the sky,
Vega, Caph and white Altair,
Unknowing that we live and die.

Aldebaran, the Bull's fierce eye,
Arcturus' sullen, fatal flare,
The silent stars burn in the sky.

Alphard, lone heart of fire on high,
Gleams from out the Hydra's lair,
Unknowing that we live and die.

They watch our tiny Earth spin by,
Incurious that we strive and dare,
The silent stars burn in the sky.

Andromeda, with Perseus nigh,
Forgets that haunted cliff's despair,
Unknowing that we live and die.

Our pain, our passion they deny,
Nor Love that outlives Death, their share.
The silent stars burn in the sky,
Unknowing that we live and die.

—SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

The Triolet consists of eight lines with two rhymes. The first line is used again as the fourth and seventh line. The second line is repeated as the eighth line and conclusion of the poem. It is desirable to vary the significance of the recurrent lines if possible.

There are hundreds of English triolets, but most of them are content to obey the rule of repetition and make no attempt to gain the more subtle grace of a varied use of the same line.

TRIOLET

When first we met, we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master;
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess.
Who could foretell the sore distress,
This irretrievable disaster,
When first we met?—we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master.

—ROBERT BRIDGES.

The Kyrielle is so simple in construction that it hardly seems in place among its more elaborate relatives. It consists merely of any number of four-line stanzas, rhymed in couplets, the last line of each stanza being the same. Originally it was always written in eight-syllable lines. The name *kyrielle* is a shortened form of *Kyrie Eleison*, (O Lord have mercy!) one of the responses of the Roman Liturgy. These responses were usually sung, the musical setting to which they were sung was called *Kyrielle*, and the name was finally applied to another set of words with a refrain. The form is preserved in a number of Anglican hymns. The following example has seven syllables.

THE PAVILION

(*Kyrielle*)

In the tents the lamps were bright,
Out beyond the summer night
Thrilled and quivered like a star:
We beneath were left so far.

From the depths of blue profound
Never any sight or sound
Came our loneliness to mar:
We beneath were left so far.

But against the summer sky
Only you stood out and I;
From all other things that are
We beneath were left so far.

—A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

The Virelai and *Virelai Nouveau* have never become popular in English, perhaps because of their monotony. In the *virelai* the number of stanzas is not fixed nor is the number of lines in a stanza. The rhyme sequence is *a, a, b,—a, a, b*, in multiples of three for the first stanza, *b, b, c,—b, b, c,—b, b, c*, in the second, *c, c, d,—c, c, d,—c, c, d*, in the third and so on for as long as the poet's invention holds out. We give two stanzas to show the structure.

SPRING SADNESS

(Virelai)

As I sat sorrowing,
Love came and bade me sing
A joyous song and meet,
For see (said he) each thing
Is merry for the spring,
And every bird doth greet
The break of blossoming,
That all the woodlands ring
Unto the young hours' feet.

Wherefore put off defeat
And rouse thee to repeat
The chimes of merles that go,
With flutings shrill and sweet,
In every green retreat,
The tune of streams that flow
And mark the fair hours' beat

With running ripples fleet
And breezes soft and low.

* * *

—JOHN PAYNE.

The *Virelai Nouveau* has but two rhymes. It begins with a couplet. The order of the rhyme and the length of the stanzas are not fixed, but the two lines of the opening couplet, used alternately, form the refrain to the other stanzas, and both together close the last stanza.

VIRELAI NOUVEAU

Good-bye to the Town! good-bye!
Hurrah! for the sea and the sky!
In the street the flower-girls cry;
In the street the water carts ply:
And a fluter, with features awry,
Plays fitfully, "Scots wha hae"—
And the throat of that fluter is dry;
Good-bye to the Town! good-bye!

And over the roof-tops nigh
Comes a waft like a dream of the May;
And a lady-bird lit on my tie;
And a cockchafer came with the tray;
And a butterfly (no one knows why)
Mistook my Aunt's cap for a spray;
And "next door" and "over the way"
The neighbors take wing and fly:
Hurrah for the sea and the sky.

* * * * *
* * * * *

So Phillis, the fawn-footed, hie
For a hansom. Ere close of the day
Between us a "world" must lie;
Good-bye to the Town! good-bye!
Hurrah! for the sea and the sky.

—AUSTIN DOBSON.

The Chant Royal was the most complicated measure of northern France as the *sestina* was of southern. Mr. Gosse calls it "the final *tour-de-force*, the *ne plus ultra* of legitimate difficulty in the construction of a poem;" but it is neither so intricate nor so difficult as the *sestina*. It is an enlarged and elaborated form of ballade and was used for stately and heroic subjects. It contains five stanzas of eleven lines each and an envoy of five lines beginning with an invocation like the envoys of ballades.

Five rhymes are employed in the order *a, b, a, b, c, c, d, d, e, d, e*, with an envoy of *d, d, e, d, e*. The rhyme-scheme of all the stanzas is identical and no rhyming word may be used a second time. The last line of each stanza and of the envoy is formed by the refrain.

CHANT ROYAL

To F. H. W.

The royal songs that men have sung abide.

Look down the cloudy vista of the years,
And where huge wars dim phantom kings divide,

The hostage was the singer, so appears
At last a gilded helm from out the gloom
And Agamemnon rises, and a plume

Comes forth to meet him confident, elate,
And Hector strides to meet relentless fate.
What forges for us all the arms they bore?
What shows us all their glory and their state?
The royal songs that men have sung of yore.

The shouts of war, and battle din subside;
The clang of harness and the clash of spears;
And now arise to comfort and to guide,
The songs men hear with thankfulness and tears;
What kings are these, with harp in hand, for whom
The noblest bards of all the earth make room?
Who sing the King of kings, the Potentate
Of glory, and the bridegroom and his mate.
O song of songs! The nations evermore
With centuries of worship consecrate
The royal songs that men have sung of yore.

No longer from the palaces of pride
The singer comes; but, followed by the sneers
Of scornful men, he wanders far and wide,
An exile, bearing grief, and taunts, and jeers,
And weight of his own soul which is his doom,
Afar from Florence even in the tomb;
Yet no man dares to call him desolate,
Who gained the eternal city by the gate
Of dolor and the Acherontian shore;
We hail him master when we celebrate
The royal songs that men have sung of yore.

Now cometh one by deepest woes untried,
With divers merry tales that whoso hears,
Shall ever see those jocund pilgrims ride,
And better love his fellow, who endears
To us plain humankind, knight, priest or groom;
And after him two lofty shadows loom
For England's praise, one mighty to create
Her kings again and one to vindicate
God's ways and hell and heaven to explore:
Their names shall ring where'er reverberate
The royal songs that men have sung of yore.

And in a later day shall it betide
That silence shall await our wistful ears?
Nay bright and beautiful behold them glide,
Shelley and Keats, to mingle with their peers;
Where Fame's great bells with solemn anthem boom,
They shall be counted worthy, nor presume,
Those two hearts young and high and passionate,
With Wordsworth and that later Laureate
Who heard with steady soul the steersman's oar,
And he, dispraised, who won the crowns that wait
The royal songs that men have sung of yore.

ENVOY

Friend, in whose verse the spirit and perfume
Of noble thoughts and fair perfection bloom,
In loving thrall to beauty dedicate,
Be of good cheer and let thy heart dilate

With joy, nor fear oblivion's fatal door

When thine shall be, with all the good and great,

The royal songs that men have sung of yore.

—M. E. R.

The Sestina originated in Provence at the end of the thirteenth century, and was one of the intricate measures in which the Troubadours delighted.

It was invented by that Arnaut Daniel whom Dante praises in the "Purgatorio," and whom Petrarch calls the "great master of love."

The sestina is the most complicated and arbitrary of all the artificial meters, being a mathematical puzzle as well as a poem. As its name implies, it is governed by the number six. It consists of six stanzas of six lines each and a final stanza of three lines. The lines are of equal length. The same six terminal words are used in each stanza but in a different sequence which is absolutely prescribed by rule. The same six words are repeated in the middle of the line and as the terminals of the concluding three-line stanza. Sestinas were unrhymed. Swinburne has written rhymed sestinas, but even in his hands the rhyme adds to the monotony and rather detracts from the charm. This old measure is put to successful modern use in Mr. Kipling's "Sestina of the Tramp Royal."

The following is the order of the terminals:

1 stanza	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2	"	6	1	5	2	4	3
3	"	3	6	4	1	2	5
4	"	5	3	2	6	1	4
5	"	4	5	1	3	6	2
6	"	2	4	6	5	3	1

In the concluding three-line stanza they run 2, 5,—4, 3,
—6, 1.

SESTINA

In fair Provence, the land of lute and rose,
 Arnaut, great master of the lore of love,
 First wrought sestines to win his lady's heart,
 For she was deaf when simpler staves he sang,
 And for her sake he broke the bonds of rhyme,
 And in this subtler measure hid his woe.

"Harsh be my lines," cried Arnaut, "harsh the woe,
 My lady, that enthroned and cruel rose,
 Inflicts on him that made her live in rhyme!"
 But through the meter spoke the voice of Love,
 And like a wildwood nightingale he sang
 Who thought in crabbed lays to ease his heart.

It is not told if her untoward heart
 Was melted by her poet's lyric woe,
 Or if in vain so amorously he sang,
 Perchance through crowd of dark conceits he rose
 To nobler heights of philosophic love,
 And crowned his later years with sterner rhyme.

This thing alone we know, the triple rhyme
Of him who bared his vast and passionate heart
To all the crossing flames of hate and love,
Wears in the midst of all its storm and woe—
As some loud morn of March may bear a rose—
The impress of a song that Arnaut sang.

“Smith of his mother-tongue,” the Frenchman sang
Of Lancelot and of Galahad, the rhyme
That beat so bloodlike at its core of rose,
It stirred the sweet Francesca’s gentle heart
To take that kiss that brought her so much woe,
And sealed in fire her martyrdom of love.

And Dante, full of her immortal love,
Stayed his drear song, and softly, fondly sang
As though his voice broke with that weight of woe;
And to this day we think of Arnaut’s rhyme,
Whenever pity at the laboring heart
On fair Francesca’s memory drops the rose.

Ah! sovereign Love, forgive this weaker rhyme!
The men of old who sang were great at heart,
Yet have we too known woe, and worn thy rose.

—EDMUND GOSSE.

The Pantoum originated in Malaysia, where it is said to have been improvised to the beating of a tom-tom. By reason of its adoption in France by Victor Hugo and other poets, it is included under French forms. It is supposed to be particularly suited to the rendering of a monotonous

subject. It consists of any number of four-line stanzas, the second and fourth line of each stanza being repeated as the first and third of the following stanza, and the second and fourth line of the last stanza being formed from the third and first of the first stanza.

MONOLOGUE D'OUTRE TOMBE

(Pantoum)

Morning and noon and night,
Here I lie in the ground,
No faintest glimmer of light,
No lightest whisper of sound.

Here I lie in the ground,
The worms glide out and in,
No lightest whisper of sound,
After a lifelong din.

* * *

The worms are wriggling away,
They are what I have been;
They will fertilize my clay;
The grass will grow more green.

They are what I have been,
I shall change, but what of that?
The grass will grow more green
The parson's sheep grow fat.

I shall change, but what of that?

All flesh is grass, one says.

The parson's sheep grow fat,

The parson grows in grace.

All flesh is grass, one says;

Grass becomes flesh, one knows;

The parson grows in grace;

I am the grace he grows.

Grass becomes flesh, one knows,

He grows like a bull of Bashan,

I am the grace he grows,

I startle his congregation.

He grows like a bull of Bashan,

One day he'll be Bishop or Dean,

I startle his congregation;

One day I shall preach to the Queen.

One day he'll be Bishop or Dean,

One of those science-haters;

One day I shall preach to the Queen,

To think of my going in gaiters!

One of those science-haters,

Blind as a mole or bat;

To think of my going in gaiters,

And wearing a shovel hat!

Blind as a mole or bat,
No faintest glimmer of light,
And wearing a shovel hat,
Morning and noon and night.
—“*Love in Idleness.*”

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Write a paragraph on the comparative values of French, English and Classical meters.
2. Are involved meters well fitted for the expression of emotional thought, or should we regard them rather as intellectual exercises?
3. Which form discussed in the chapter seems to you best fitted for the conveyance of dignified thought?
4. What is the meaning of the word tercet?
5. What constitutes an envoy to a poem?
6. Define (a) a Ballade; (b) a Rondeau.
7. Write a Villanelle upon a pastoral theme of your own selection.
8. Which “French form” suits your own fancy best?
9. Discuss briefly what types of themes would be best suited to any three French forms.
10. Choosing your own form from among the models in this chapter, write the introductory stanzas of a poem and give an idea of how you would handle the body of the poem and its conclusion.
11. If time affords, complete the poem.
12. Transfer the same theme to some other French form, if practicable.

CHAPTER XXII

SONG-WRITING

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

—H. W. LONGFELLOW, *The Arrow and the Song*.

The poetic song, being definitely composed for musical accompaniment, is the true lyric, and is often so named today. But, especially in the librettos of comic operas and musical comedies, the term *lyric* is gratuitously applied to light verse, which may adopt such tones as sentiment, humor, satire, *vers de société*, nonsense, parody, burlesque, and whimsicality.

A good lyric is not necessarily a good song. Song-writing demands some knowledge of, or at least an ear for music, although other kinds of lyric poetry do not. Shelley, the supreme lyrist, knew nothing of music, and some of his lyrics are almost unsingable. The best song-writers usually

sang their own songs. Burns, the most spontaneous poet of Great Britain, found little use for the names of trochee, dactyl, amphimacer, and the like, and had his fling at the poets who

Think to climb Parnassus
By dint of Greek.

He fitted his lines to well-known tunes and sang them himself. So also did Tom Moore.

In the days of Elizabeth and after the Restoration, in the time of Charles II, well nigh every English gentleman could write a song, both words and music, and play and sing it as well. To the general cultivation of "chamber-music" in those reigns we owe a rich store of song-lyrics, to coin a seemingly redundant expression. In later times, Browning was something of a musician, and our own Sidney Lanier tried to fit the rules of music to the art of poetry, not always with perfect success, but the songs of Browning and of Lanier are not particularly singable. The reason is that the writers had not in mind the requirements of the singing voice, and too often grouped words which *read* well, but did not *sing* well.

General Hints

In singing, one must open one's mouth, therefore the more vowel sounds in a song the better, the more *open* vowel sounds (a and o) the better still, and the more *terminal* vowel sounds by all odds still the better because if a note has to be prolonged the meaning of the word need not then be lost. This requirement, besides those of sim-

plicity, sentiment, and rhythm, is fundamental to all good song making.

Crowded consonants and words ending in the labials *p*, *b* and *m*, and the fricative *f*, all of which close the lips, should be absolutely avoided.

A short line is preferable to a long one.

A taking rhythm—a rhythm with a lilt—should be chosen.

In literary form, make every word count, yet do not compress your language so as to obscure the meaning.

The refrain may often be used with good effect.

The best method of all is to choose an air and fit your words to it, for if the song does not sing itself, no one will sing it.

Observe the simplicity, clearness, compact form, rhythm, sentiment, and charm of the following songs which have long been favorites. Observe, too, those of you who know familiar settings for these songs, how even more smoothly they sing than they read.

O, MY LUVE'S LIKE A RED, RED ROSE

O, my luve's like a red, red rose

That's newly sprung in June:

O, my luve's like the melodie

That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,

So deep in luve am I:

And I will luve thee still, my dear,

Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And rocks melt wi' the sun:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

—ROBERT BURNS.

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN

Kathleen Mavourneen! the gray dawn is breaking,
The horn of the hunter is heard on the hill;
The lark from her light wing the bright dew is shaking—
Kathleen Mavourneen! what, slumbering still?

Oh, hast thou forgotten how soon we must sever?
Oh! hast thou forgotten this day we must part?
It may be for years, and it may be forever!
Oh, why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart?
Oh, why art thou silent, Kathleen Mavourneen?

Kathleen Mavourneen, awake from thy slumbers!
The blue mountains glow in the sun's golden light;
Ah, where is the spell that once hung on my numbers?
Arise in thy beauty, thou star of my night!

Mavourneen, Mavourneen, my sad tears are falling,

To think that from Erin and thee I must part!

It may be for years, and it may be forever!

Then why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart?

Then why art thou silent, Kathleen Mavourneen?

—LOUISA MACARTNEY CRAWFORD.

SERENADE

(From "The Spanish Student")

Stars of the summer night!

Far in yon azure deeps,

Hide, hide your golden light!

She sleeps!

My lady sleeps!

Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!

Far down yon western steep,

Sink, sink in silver light!

She sleeps!

My lady sleeps!

Sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!

Where yonder woodbine creeps,

Fold, fold thy pinions light!

She sleeps!

My lady sleeps!

Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
Tell her, her lover keeps
Watch, while in slumbers light
She sleeps!
My lady sleeps!
Sleeps!

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Is the expression *song-lyric* really redundant?
2. What constitutes the *refrain* of a song? Give an example.
3. (a) Distinguish between *refrain* and *chorus*. (b) Is the word *chorus* ever improperly used?
4. Which vowel sound is best fitted for the last position in a line, particularly when the tune is likely to provide a sustained note?
5. What other vowel sounds are desirable there?
6. What class of sounds should be avoided at the ends of lines?
7. Is alliteration desirable in the lines of a song? Give reasons supporting your answer.
8. As liberal awards await writers of successful "popular" songs, it is well to study the words of such songs, and to determine the qualities in which they frequently resemble one another; as, for instance, in a chorus composed largely of dactyls appropriate to waltz music. Therefore write an analysis of a "song hit" of the day.
9. Write a rollicking song upon some stirring, out-of-doors theme.

10. Give several original themes for songs.

11. What is a hymn?

12. Write a hymn of patriotism. The suggestion has been hazarded that America's greatest national hymn has yet to be written.

13. Do you know of any so-called hymns which are merely versified sentiment, without any direct appeal to the Deity?

14. Examine a standard hymn-book and make a careful analysis of (a) the *poetry* of the best hymns, like "Lead, Kindly Light;" (b) the adaptation of meters to words, or *vice versa*; (c) what meters are best suited to solemn and majestic hymns, and what are best fitted to livelier sentiments.

15. Make a scrap-book collection of as many hymn meters as you can gather, affixing to each an analysis of the accents, or beats of the musical rhythm.

CHAPTER XXIII

LIGHT VERSE

A comic subject loves an humble verse.

—HORACE, *Ars Poetica*.

They tell me new methods now govern the Muses,
The modes of expression have changed with the times;
That low is the rank of the poet who uses
The old-fashioned verse with intentional rhymes.
And quite out of date is rhythmical metre;
The critics declare it an insult to art.
But oh! the sweet swing of it, oh! the clear ring of it,
Oh! the great pulse of it, right from the heart,
Art or no art.

I sat by the side of that old poet, Ocean,
And counted the billows that broke on the rocks;
The tide lilted in with a rhythmical motion;
The sea-gulls dipped downward in time-keeping flocks.
I watched while a giant wave gathered its forces,
And then on the gray granite precipice burst;
And I knew as I counted, while other waves mounted,
I knew the tenth billow would rhyme with the first.

Below in the village a church-bell was chiming,
And back in the woodland a little bird sang;
And, doubt it who will, yet those two sounds were rhyming,
As out o'er the hill-tops they echoed and rang.
The Winds and the Trees fell to talking together;
And nothing they said was didactic or terse;
But everything spoken was told in unbroken
And beautiful rhyming and rhythmical verse.

So rhythm I hail it, though critics assail it,
And hold melting rhymes as an insult to art,
For oh! the sweet swing of it, oh! the dear ring of it,
Oh! the strong pulse of it, right from the heart,
Art or no art.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, in *Lippincott's Magazine*.

We always invite difficulties when we attempt to make hard and fast classifications under a broad general subject, and this is especially the case when the subject itself is not one of clearly marked boundaries. So as we consider light verse under several rather obvious sub-heads, it must be kept in mind that these divisions cannot always be clearly separated from each other—chiefly because one piece of verse may readily bear marks of two or three sorts, even when it clearly belongs primarily to one class.

Very little light verse may justly aspire to be classed as poetry, yet most of the great poets of all time—among them Aristophanes, Horace, Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge, Burns, Keats, Henley, Mrs. Browning, Holmes, Taylor, Longfellow, and Emerson—have written delightfully in lighter vein, even those whose names are glorious for sublime poetic achievement frivolling as playfully as their less serious brothers. The fact that one is a distinguished poet offers, therefore, no guarantee that all his verse is poetry.

Light verse offers a wider range of form than does even real poetry, for it is obvious that, on the one hand, the parodist may imitate every form known to the poets while the whimsical rhymster will invent new conceits every day. At once the broadest and highest-grade group of light verse is known as

1. Vers de Société

For this term it is difficult to find a precise English equivalent. No single word quite includes or describes it, so we may say that *vers de société* is not merely "society verse," as a literal translation would suggest, but *short, light, sentimental or playful verse of no profound poetic quality, and breathing an air of polite knowledge of the world.*

Verse of this sort is pleasantly plentiful—collectors¹ have filled volumes with graceful specimens. Some critics maintain that its themes should be confined to the world of fashion, but most do not limit it so closely. It is certain, however, that an intimacy with "Society" is almost essential for the successful writer of these sophisticated verses, which usually celebrate my lady's charms, or some other theme akin to love.

Touching the composition of such verse, in her "A Vers de Société Anthology," Miss Wells quotes these remarks from Mr. Locker-Lampson: "The tone should not be pitched high; it should be terse and idiomatic, and rather in the conversational key; the rhythm should be crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced. The entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish, and completeness; for subordination to the rules of composition, and perfection of execution, are of the utmost importance.

"The qualities of brevity are absolutely essential. The poem may be tinctured with a well-bred philosophy, it may be whimsically sad, it may be gay and gallant, it may be

¹ Carolyn Wells, Brander Matthews, Frederick Locker-Lampson, Austin Dobson, and W. Davenport Adams, among others.

playfully malicious or tenderly ironical, it may display lively banter, and it may be satirically facetious; it may even, considering it merely as a work of art, be pagan in its philosophy or trifling in its tone, but it must never be flat, or ponderous, or commonplace."

These are rather broad permissions, and probably less valuable than the final prohibition, but they will serve to indicate the easy, spontaneous, middle-ground between the solemn and the comic, the maudlin and the cynical, which is occupied by *vers de société*.

In form there is equal latitude, though the French meters are favorites with most of the poets. Thackeray's "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," Alfred Austin's "At the Lattice," and Longfellow's "Beware," are among the most famous specimens in the language. The last-named we give in full, together with some other representative examples.

BEWARE

(From the German)

I know a maiden fair to see,
Take care!
She can both false and friendly be,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She has two eyes, so soft and brown,
Take care!

She gives a side-glance and looks down,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

And she has hair of a golden hue,
Take care!
And what she says, it is not true,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She has a bosom white as snow,
Take care,
She knows how much it is best to show,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

She gives thee a garland woven fair,
Take care!
It's a fool's cap for thee to wear,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee!

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

MY CHAPERON

No Dragon is my chaperon;

She has a method all her own
 To hold me safe from harm.
 It is a method very wise,
 Though simple as can be:
 When men come by she makes such eyes
 They never look at me.

—ANNE WARRINGTON WITHERUP.

SONG FROM "THE DUENNA"

I ne'er could any lustre see
 In eyes that would not look on me;
 I ne'er saw nectar on a lip,
 But where my own did hope to sip.
 Has the maid who seeks my heart
 Cheeks of rose, untouched by art?
 I will own thy color true,
 When yielding blushes aid their hue.

Is her hand so soft and pure?
 I must press it, to be sure;
 Nor can I be certain then,
 Till it, grateful, press again.
 Must I, with attentive eye,
 Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
 I will do so when I see
 That heaving bosom sigh for me.

—RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

The first stanza of Thackeray's "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse" will be enough to suggest its theme and treatment:

A street there is in Paris famous,
For which no rhyme our language yields,
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is—
The New Street of the Little Fields.
And here's an inn, not rich and splendid,
But still in comfortable case;
The which in youth I oft attended
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

Here are the opening stanzas of Austin Dobson's

"LE ROMAN DE LA ROSE"

Poor Rose! I lift you from the street,—
Far better I should own you
Than you should lie for random feet
Where careless hands have thrown you.

Poor pinky petals, crushed and torn!
Did heartless Mayfair use you,
Then cast you forth to lie forlorn,
For chariot-wheels to bruise you?

The remaining six stanzas lightly touch the love interest which the finding of the rose suggests.

2. Satirical Verse

Wit consists in the sudden revelation of some unexpected relation between two objects or ideas. This surprising disclosure must not excite any higher emotion than admiration for the cleverness of the witty person and for his

mental superiority; for example, wit does not arouse feelings of the sublime, the pitiful, or the tenderly beautiful. It differs from *humor* mainly in its sharpness. Someone has said that "wit laughs at you, humor laughs with you." Wit is based chiefly on likenesses, humor on incongruities. Wit may sneer, but humor never. Wit often wounds with its keen rapier, humor heals with its balm. The following variously-quoted couplet is satirically witty:

A woman, a spaniel, a walnut tree—
The more you beat 'em, the better they be.

Whereas the incongruous association of moral qualities with oddities of dress in Albert G. Greene's perennial "Old Grimes" is humorous:

Old Grimes is dead, that good old man,—
We ne'er shall see him more;
He used to wear a long black coat,
All buttoned down before.

* * *

Whene'er he heard the voice of pain,
His breast with pity burned;
The large round head upon his cane
From ivory was turned.

Satire is a form of wit which exposes follies and makes pretension ridiculous. Its object, like that of true comedy, is to instruct by showing the folly of imprudent courses, but that purpose is often lost sight of today.

Satirical poetry is very ancient. The Greek comedies abounded in brilliant examples. Horace and Juvenal

have made Roman poetry immortal, Voltaire has caused French verse to sparkle, while Dryden, Pope, and Byron have excelled in England, as Lowell did in America. Indeed, all great poets have written brilliant satire; for it requires a mind of superior all-round equipment to indite clever satirical verse.

The range of subject-matter for satirical poetry is as wide as human weakness. The foibles of Government have always been a shining target for the satirist, as the following extract from Lowell's long composition will illustrate. It is a portrait of the politician, "Hosea Biglow," drawn by himself.

DEAR SIR,—You wish to know my notions

On sartin pints thet rile the land:

There's nothin' thet my natur so shuns

Ez bein' mum or underhand;

I'm a straight-spoken kind o' creetur

Thet blurts right out wut's in his head,

An' ef I've one pecooler feetur,

It is a nose thet wunt be led.

So, to begin at the beginnin',

An' come direcly to the pint,

I think the country's underpinnin'

Is some consid'ble out o' jint;

I aint agoin' to try your patience

By tellin' who done this or thet,

I don't make no insinooations,

I jest let on I smell a rat.

Thet is, I mean, it seems to me so,
But, ef the public think I'm wrong,
I wunt deny but what I be so,—
An', fact, it don't smell very strong;
My mind's tu fair to lose its balance
An' say which party hez most sense;
There may be folks o' greater talence
Thet can't set stiddier on the fence.

I'm an eclectic; ez to choosin'
'Twixt this an' thet, I'm plaguy lawth;
I leave a side that looks like losin',
But (wile there's doubt) I stick to both;
I stan' upon the Constitution,
Ez preudunt statesmun say, who've planned
A way to git the most profusion
O' chances ez to *ware* they'll stand.

—*Biglow Papers.*

Practice has not kept pace with precept with regard to Addison's declaration that his satires should "consider the crime as it appears in the species, not as it is circumstanced in the individual," for many satires flay the individual brutally enough. Pope, for instance, instead of being satisfied to "shoot folly as it flies" sometimes made direct attacks by name. Such methods rob satire of its subtlety and turn wit into assault. All genuine wits scorn to demolish with a bludgeon what they can puncture with a pen-point. But after all, Pope was subtle, and had a just hatred of those who fought from ambush. In his Prologue to "Satires" he scorns those who

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend.

Dryden drove a middle course at least in his "Absalom and Achitophel," though he was not always so moderate. The character of Zimri satirized the Duke of Buckingham. "The character . . . is not bloody," says Dryden himself in his "Discourse on Satire," "but it is ridiculous enough, and he for whom it was intended was too witty to resent it as an injury."

One of the passages which holds the Duke up to ridicule is this lampoon, which could hardly amuse any but a highly good-natured subject:

A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.

Satire that goes too far defeats itself, for it loses the sympathy of the reader—not to say the person satirized! "Satire," says Miss Wells in her "A Satire Anthology," "depends on the reader. What seems to us satire today may not seem so tomorrow. Or, what seems satire to a pessimistic mind, may seem merely good-natured chaff to an optimist."

One of the famous satires dealing with individuals is that of Thackeray, poking fun at the then popular craze for Goethe's romance. Perhaps these lines suggested the modern art of reviewing books in clever rhymes.

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER

Werther had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her?
She was cutting bread and butter.

Charlotte was a married lady,
And a moral man was Werther,
And for all the wealth of Indies
Would do nothing for to hurt her.

So he sighed and pined and ogled,
And his passion boiled and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter.

The practices of society furnish the themes for by far the greatest number of modern satires—which, happily, are more bright than waspish, even if less literary than those of former days. Such satire is of the period, just as Samuel

Butler lashed the warring churchmen of his era in "Hudibras," a bitter, clever diatribe.

For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true Church militant;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery,
And prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks;
Call fire, and sword, and desolation,
A godly, thorough reformation.

—*The Religion of Hudibras.*

Burns was less bitter and more effective in the following stanzas from his "Address to the Unco Guid:—"

Oh, ye wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibours' fauts an' folly!
Whose life is like a weel-gawn mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water,
The heapéd hopper's ebbing still,
An' still the clap plays clatter.

* * *

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;

Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
 To step aside is human.
 One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving why they do it;
 An' just as lamely can ye mark
 How far, perhaps, they rue it.

It is pleasant to know that Mrs. Browning had no personal cause to inspire the concluding stanza of her verses. The opening lines are also reproduced in order to show the contrast.

A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS

Love me, sweet, with all thou art,
 Feeling, thinking, seeing;
 Love me in the lightest part,
 Love me in full being.

* * *

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, dear,
 Woman's love's no fable,
 I will love *thee*—half a year,
 As a man is able.

Oliver Wendell Holmes dealt out wholesome satire to the all-bumptious when he wrote this stanza in "A Familiar Letter to Several Correspondents:"

But remember, O dealer in phrases sonorous,
 So daintily chosen, so tunefully matched,
 Though you soar with the wings of the cherubim o'er us,
 The ovum was human from which you were hatched.

Here is a famous quatrain poem by John Godfrey Saxe:

WOMAN'S WILL

Men, dying, make their wills, but wives
Escape a work so sad;
Why should they make what all their lives
The gentle dames have had?

Lowell thus concludes his lines on

THE PIOUS EDITOR'S CREED

In short I firmly du believe
In Humbug generally,
Fer it's a thing thet I perceive
To hev a solid vally;
This heth my faithful shepherd ben,
In pasture sweet hath led me,
An' this'll keep the people green,
To feed as they have fed me.

The present-day magazines are constantly adding to our store of satirical verse. We conclude this section with the following characteristic examples:

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

"You wish to wed my daughter?" said
The father of fair Flo.
"What are your prospects?" George replied:
"That's what *I* want to know!"

—HAROLD SUSMAN.

NO MORE

I played with Maude in days of yore,
When Bridge became her craze;
But now I play with her no more,—
She has such winning ways!

—LA TOUCHE HANCOCK.

THE TYPICAL TOPICAL SONG

In the midst of the craze for these musical plays
Which hold such remarkable sway,
When an item like plot doesn't matter a jot,
And art has a very small "a,"
At times it will hap that the usual snap
Is lacking, and something goes wrong;
Still, you can reply it will "go" bye and bye
With a typical topical song!

Here's a subject, or two, that often will do,
If sung with a confident *nous*—
The high price of meat the people will greet
With shouts that will bring down the house!
If the tariff you chaff, 'twill elicit a laugh,
And the subway's especially strong,
And a touch on divorce can't be missing, of course,
From the typical topical song!

Then the suffragette cause will win great applause,
The comet will prove a big draw,
Joy riding, a strike, chauffeurs, and the like,
They'll all of them bring a guffaw!

It won't matter a bit, if the play's not a hit;
You'll find that the public will throng
To the musical piece, which will take a new lease
With this typical topical song!

—LA TOUCHE HANCOCK.

3. Humorous Verse

Humor defies definition. Those who do not know it for what it is will never learn from a lexicon; yet a good definition were desirable enough since no two authorities agree as to where it begins and ends. Either one of two elements, however, we shall be certain to find in all humor: a sudden, mirth-provoking surprise, or a playful sense of the incongruous. And these characteristics of humor in general, inhere in humorous verse.

As we have already said, the types of light verse often overlap, and this is most true of humorous lines—a statement too obvious to need proof. We shall find humor in parody, nonsense rhymes, and whimsical verse, just as we found it delicately present in much *vers de société*.

Humorous verse is as old as literature; for proof read the following from Aristophanes, which contains both wit and humor:

WOMEN'S CHORUS

They're always abusing the women,
As a terrible plague to men:
They say we're the root of all evil,
And repeat it again and again;

Of war, and quarrels, and bloodshed,
All mischief, be what it may!
And pray, then, why do you marry us,
If we're all the plagues you say?
And why do you take such care of us,
And keep us so safe at home,
And are never easy a moment
If ever we chance to roam?
When you ought to be thanking heaven
That your plague is out of the way,
You all keep fussing and fretting—
“Where is *my* Plague today?”
If a Plague peeps out of the window,
Up go the eyes of men;
If she hides, then they all go staring
Until she looks out again.

—Translation by WILLIAM COLLINS.

Punning verse is a time-honored, or, as some cynics aver, dishonored type of humorous “poetry,” and none so clever as Tom Hood in its making. “Faithless Nelly Gray” is so well-known as to make extended quotation needless.

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,
And used to war's alarms;
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
So he laid down his arms.

Now as they bore him off the field
Said he, "Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot."

Hood used the same meter in his less-known verses, "Faithless Sally Brown." The last stanza contains his famous pun:

His death, which happened in his berth,
At forty-odd befell;
They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton tolled the bell.

In Oliver Goldsmith's "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog," we find the same iambic measure:

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes:
The naked every day he clad—
When he put on his clothes.

Many present-day rhymesters, too, have found iambic four-threes a convenient form for their humorous verse. We append several, which illustrate a variety of types.

HIS PLAN

To dodge his creditors, required
Such vigilance and vim,
A motor car he went and hired,
And now they're dodging him!

—LA TOUCHE HANCOCK.

ONE OR T'OTHER

An acrobat I chanced to meet,
And these wise words he said:
"We must be light upon our feet,
Or light upon our head."

—SAM S. STINSON.

A NATURE FAKER

The tadpole is a curious beast,
A paradox complete;
For he is but four inches long,
When he has grown four feet.

—E. F. MOBERLY.

Other rhymesters a-plenty adopt other metrical forms
for their punning verse.

PYRO-TECHNIQUE

Miss Isabel Smith is the maid that we hire,
And one morning this Isabel Smith was on fire.
I quenched the wild flames with a bottle of stout,
And you never saw Isabel Smith so put out!

—C. H.

NOMENCLATURE

When Bossy invented a gentleman calf
They called him Monseigneur Boulé.
Next spring when a lady calf dawned on the scene
They christened her Calfy au Lait.

—J. B. E.

THE ONLY WAY

If he comes to borrow ten,
I am out.
Tell him, office boy, again,
I am out.
It's the only way to win,
Or to save my hard-earned tin,
For if he should find me in,
I am out.

—JAMES H. HUBBARD.

Sometimes a bit of punning verse like the following will go the rounds with additions by every paper that prints it.

When many fiction writers try
Their thoughts to give us hot,
We get e-rot-ic novels, with
The accent on the rot.

—*Lippincott's Magazine.*

When some hair-dressers seek to give
Us hair to fit the hat,
We get er-rat-ic coiffures, with
The accent on the rat.

—*Boston Traveler.*

And when the fisher leaves the pool
And gladly home does hie,
We get some li-kely stories, with
The accent on the lie.

—*Topeka Capital.*

And when some fellows go down town
At night, they make the bull
Of coming home quite beauti-ful,
With the accent on the ful.

—Denver *Post*.

Now here we have the daily rhyme,
Though not as fierce as some,
Penned by the office bum-pkin, with
The accent on the bum.

—Atlanta *Georgian*.

If I were a copy-reader,
Forced to suffer such attacks,
Some poor poet would get an ax-sent,
With the accent on the ax.

—DUDLEY GLASS in *Lippincott's Magazine*.

A typical bit of contemporary humorous verse in the style of Hood is this:

THE SUICIDE

The painters came to us one day,
Our woodwork to demolish,
And on the stairs they left a can
Of finest hardwood polish.

Our puppy's name is Cyrus Sims,
A king of past offences.
Our puppy ate that sticky can
And dared the consequences.

"Oh Cyrus, are you going to die?
What makes your breath diminish?"
"I cannot say," the pup replied,
"I fear it is the finish."

—CHESTER FIRKINS.

Many capital "poems" do not depend upon the pun, but present humor of idea or humor of situation. Here are several in this different vein:

THE VOICE OF THE EAST TO THE VOICE OF THE WEST

A most appreciative cuss,
The Sun gets up to look at us,
But when he strikes the West instead
He gets so bored he goes to bed.

—McLANDBURGH WILSON.

THE VOICE OF THE WEST TO THE VOICE OF THE EAST

'Tis true that in the East the Sun
Doth rise, and yet 'tis evident
He likes it not, but hastens West
And settles down in sweet content!

—C. B. D.

IT'S VERY QUEER

When you call a girl a kitten
You are sure to get a pat,
So why should you get the mitten
When you say she is a cat?
But you do.

CHRISTMAS

Step wid de banjo an' glide wid de fiddle,
 Dis' ain' no time fu' to pottah an' piddle;
 Fu' Christmas is comin', it's right on de way,
 An' dey's houahs to dance 'fo' de break o' de day.

What if de win' is a taihin' an' whistlin'?
 Look at dat fiah how hit's spittin' and bristlin'!
 Heat in de ashes an' heat in de cindahs,
 Ol' Mistah Fros' kin des look thoo de windahs.

Heat up de toddy an' pas' de wa'm glasses,
 Don' stop to shivah at blowin's an' blas'es,
 Keep on de kittle an' keep it a hummin',
 Eat all an' drink all, dey's lots mo' a-comin'.
 Look hyeah, Maria, don't open dat oven,
 Want all dese people a-pushin' an' shovin'?

Res' from de dance? yes, you done cotch dat odah,
 Mammy done cotch it, an' law! hit nigh flo'd huh;
 'Possum is monst'ous fu' mekin' folks fin' it!
 Come, draw yo' cheers up, I's sho' I do' min' it.
 Eat up dem critters, you men folks an' wimmens,
 'Possums ain' skace w'en dey's lots o' pu'simmons.

—PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR.

4. Parody and Travesty

Parody is mimicry rather than imitation and has for its object either the casting of more or less good-natured ridicule on the original, or merely the convenient use of a

well-known poem usually in jest, though light verse may be parodied in serious verses. Parody becomes *travesty* or *burlesque* when carried to the extreme of the ridiculous—though burlesque and *extravaganza* need not parody a *specific* original, but may poke fun at a general type. Extravaganza is also taken to mean uproarious fun of any sort.

In common with other forms of light verse, parody is ancient, and many able poets have indulged in it—at times; its constant practice, however, is anything but a mark of originality. It is only too common to see poems of beauty and thoughts of sublimity mangled, without the slightest trace of cleverness in the perpetrator. But bright parody always retains something of the original flavor while it wittily turns aside to produce either merited ridicule or wholesome fun.

Miss Wells has adequately divided parodies into three classes: first, those which consist in *word-rendering*, depending for their interest “entirely upon the substitution of a trivial or commonplace motive for a lofty one;” second, *form-rendering*, or “the imitation of the style of an author, preferably an author given to mannerisms of some sort;” third, *sense-rendering*, which is “by far the most meritorious, and utilizes not only the original writer’s diction and style, but follows a train of thought precisely along the lines that he would have pursued from the given premises.”

A fourth class, which begins with the exact words of the parodied verse and ends with something quite different, is frequent today and mainly limited to one or two short stanzas. This may be called the *semi-parody*.

A series of examples of these several forms is appended. Comparison with the originals will make interesting work for the rhymester and the student.

(a) *Word-renderings.*

THE BAT

(After Jane Taylor)

Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!

* * *

Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky.

—LEWIS CARROLL.

THE BRIDGE

(After Longfellow)

They stood on the bridge at midnight,
In a park not far from the town;
They stood on the bridge at midnight,
Because they didn't sit down.

The moon rose o'er the city,
Behind the dark church spire;
The moon rose o'er the city,
And kept on rising higher.

How often, oh, how often!
They whispered words so soft;
How often, oh, how often;
How often, oh, how oft!

—BEN KING.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIR JOHN SMITH

(After Charles Wolfe)

Not a sigh was heard, nor a funeral tone,
As the man to his bridal we hurried;
Not a woman discharged her farewell groan,
On the spot where the fellow was married.

We married him just about eight at night,
Our faces paler turning,
By the struggling moonbeams' misty light,
And the gas-lamp's steady burning.

* * *

Few and short were the things we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow,
But we silently gazed on the man that was wed,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we silently stood about,
With spite and anger dying,
How the merest stranger had cut us out,
With only half our trying.

* * *

But our heavy task at length was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the spiteful squib and pun
The girls were sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we turned to go,—
We had struggled and we were human;
We shed not a tear, and we spoke not our woe,
But we left him alone with his woman.

—PHOEBE CAREY.

(b) Form-renderings

THE AMATEUR FLUTE

(After Poe)

Hear the fluter with his flute,
Silver flute!
Oh, what a world of wailing is awakened by its toot!
How it demi-semi-quavers
On the maddened air of night!
And defieth all endeavors
To escape the sound or sigh
Of the flute, flute, flute,
With its tootle, tootle, toot;
With reiterated tootleing of exasperating toots,
The long protracted tootleing of agonizing toots
Of the flute, flute, flute,
Flute, flute, flute,
And the wheezings and the spittings of its toots.
Should he get that other flute,
Golden flute,
Oh, what a deeper anguish will his presence institoot!
How his eyes to heaven he'll raise,
As he plays,
All the days!
How he'll stop us on our ways
With its praise!
And the people—oh, the people,
That don't live up in the steeple,
But inhabit Christian parlors

Where he visiteth and plays,
 Where he plays, plays, plays,
 In the cruellest of ways,
 And thinks we ought to listen,
 And expects us to be mute,
 Who would rather have the earache
 Than the music of his flute,
 Of his flute, flute, flute,
 And the tootings of his toot,
 Of the toots wherewith he tooteth its agonizing toot,
 Of the flute, flewt, fluit, float,
 Phlute, phlewtt, phlewght,
 And the tootle, tootle, tooting of its toot.

—*Anonymous.*

YE CLERKE OF YE WETHERE

(After Chaucer)

A clerke there was, a puissant wight was hee,
 Who of ye wethere hadde ye maisterie;
 Alway it was his mirth and his solace—
 To put each seson's wethere oute of place.
 Whanne that Aprille showres wer our desyre,
 He gad us Julye sonnes as hotte as fyre;
 But sith ye summere togges we donned agayne,
 Eftsoons ye wethere chaunged to cold and rayne.
 Wo was the pilgrimme who fared forth a-foote,
 Without any gyngham that him list uppe-putte;
 And gif no mackyntosches eke had hee,
 A parlous state that wight befelle—pardie!

We wist not gif it nexte ben colde or hotte,
 Cogswounds! ye barde a grewsome colde hath gotte!
 Certes, that clerke's one mightie man withalle,
 Let none don him offence, lest ille befall.

—*Anonymous.*

(c) *Sense-rendering*

One stanza only is given from the following:

ODE ON A JAR OF PICKLES

(After Keats)

A sweet, acidulous, down-reaching thrill
 Pervades my sense. I seem to see or hear
 The lushy garden-grounds of Greenwich Hill
 In autumn, where the crispy leaves are sere;
 And odors haunt me of remotest spice
 From the Levant or musky-aired Cathay,
 Or the saffron-fields of Jerico,
 Where everything is nice.
 The more I sniff, the more I swoon away,
 And what else mortal palate craves, forego.

—BAYARD TAYLOR.

(d) *Semi-Parodies*

A REAL SUMMER GIRL

(After Whittier)

Maud Muller on a summer's day
 Raked the meadow sweet with hay.
 You'd hardly expect a girl, you know,
 In summertime to be shovelling snow.

—J. G. NEUMARKER.

ANOTHER WISE MAN

(After a Nursery Rhyme)

There was a man in our town,
And wondrous wise was he;
He took his axe one autumn day
And chopped down an old tree.

And when he saw the tree was down,
With all his might and main
He swung his axe with lusty strokes
And chopped it up again.

—E. F. MOBERLY.

REVERSE ENGLISH

(After a Nursery Rhyme)

A diller, a dollar, a ten-o'clock scholar;
What makes you come so fast?
You used to be behind before,
But now you're first at last.

—L. C. DAVIS.

A Chain of Parodies

THE ORIGINAL

There was a man in our town,
And he was wondrous wise.
He jumped into a bramble bush
And scratched out both his eyes.

And when he saw his eyes were out
With all his might and main
He jumped into another bush
And scratched them in again.

If Mr. R-dy-rd K-pl-ng had conceived this idea, we
should probably know it in this guise:

A man there was who was wondrous wise
(Even as you and I!)
He jumped in a bush where he lost both eyes.
His action occasioned a great surprise,
But he said he needed the exercise
(Even as you and I!)
Oh, the sightless strain and the burning pain!
It stung like a white-hot brand.
He jumped in another bush near-by
And scratched them in with a heart-felt sigh;
How—I ne'er could understand.

I am quite sure Miss C-r-lyn W-lls would have made a
limerick of it, thus:

A wise man in one of his rambles
Lost his eyes in a big bush of brambles.
He jumped with a cheer
In another bush near
And scratched them back in with mad scrambles.

Omar might have incorporated it into the Rubaiyat:

A Native of Our Town who was most wise,
While seeking Something novel to devise,
 Into a Bush of Brambles took a Leap,
And 'mid Its Branches scratched out both His Eyes.

And when He saw that both His Eyes were out,
He paused for One Brief Moment as in Doubt,
 And then into Another Bush he jumped
And scratched back in His Peepers with a Shout.

From Virgil's pen it would have come to us as a flowing
hexameter:

Wondrous the wisdom and nerve of a man in our town
 whom I sing of,
Who, while out tramping and quietly seeking for novel
 diversion,
Recklessly leaped in a bush full of prickles and scratched
 both his eyes out.
He, when he found that his peepers had suffered complete
 extirpation,
Sought for a similar bush, which he jumped in and quickly
 restored them.

H-ry W. L-gf-ll-w might have given it to the world in
this form:

Once a wise man in our village,
Longing for a new sensation,
Jumped into a bush of brambles
Where he damaged his apparel,

Likewise rasped his epidermis,
Also scratched out both his peepers.
When he saw his eyes were missing,
Heeding not his frayed condition,
He another bush selected
Into which he took a header,
And amid its thorny branches
Both his orbs he soon recovered.

Mr. W-ll-ce Ir-in might have woven it into a tuneful
jingle in this fashion:

In our quiet old town lived a man of renown,
And he was exceedingly wise.
He made a mad rush at a blackberry bush
And jumped in and scratched out his eyes.
When he saw they were out, he hunted about
Till that bush's twin brother he found,
Which he quickly jumped in, sadly scarring his skin,
And emerged with his eyes safe and sound.

—EDMUND MOBERLY.

5. Nonsense Verse

This type of light verse is that which conveys merely nonsensical or ludicrous ideas. The result may be chiefly brought about by such ingenious verbal inventions as have endeared Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear to millions. Who has not felt with conviction that "a runcible hat" was really worn by the charming writer who conceived the term! And who has not longed to know the joys of a

"frabjous day!" These meaningless words are somehow so convincing that we find ourselves believing in them—somewhere they must be real language, as indeed they have been to the old and young children of three generations.

Then, too, there is a rhythmical appropriateness about each nonsense-line by these genuine artists, and those written by many of their imitators, that is the sign and seal of artistry. Read "Jabberwocky" aloud and you feel the joy of its sound and movement. Then try to substitute either dictionary words or concoctions of your own, and note the loss.

But meaningless words were woven into patterns of verse long before Lear and Carroll sang, so that these merry friends of children must not have all the credit belonging to inventors. Yet they, above all others, perfected the gentle art of mingling nonsense, no sense, and very good sense.

On many accounts it will pay all poets and rhymesters—if any there be so unfortunate as not to know these delights—to read and study the verses in "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through a Looking Glass" by Lewis Carroll (Charles L. Dodgson), the collected "Nonsense Books" by Edward Lear, the "Bab Ballads" by W. S. Gilbert, whose work with Sir Arthur Sullivan in their light operas has made the world their debtor, and "A Nonsense Anthology" by Carolyn Wells, with its charming introductory essay. Our magazines are also constantly purveying new verses by Mr. Gelett Burgess, who invented the "purple cow;" Mr. Oliver Herford, who has introduced us to other animals

outside the zoo; Miss Wells, who makes good verse as well as judges it; and several other scarcely less ingenious and graceful rhymesters.

JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that scratch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought.
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock with eyes of flame,
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through, and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
Oh, frabjous day! Callooh! callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

"Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe.

—LEWIS CARROLL.

Is not all this very real after all? Perhaps, we feel, if only we knew a little more, we might comprehend every part of the thrilling adventure with the Jabberwock. As it is, the wonderful invention never fails, in that remarkable way which art claims for its own, to possess the imagination utterly.

Observe now the lilting quality of these lines by Lear:

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat;
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the moon above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love!
What a beautiful Pussy you are,—
You are,
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!
How wonderful sweet you sing!
O let us be married,—too long we have tarried,—
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away for a year and a day
To the land where the Bong tree grows
And there in a wood, a piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,—
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the turkey, who lives on the hill.
They dined upon mince and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon,
And hand in hand on the edge of the sand
They danced by the light of the moon,—
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

—EDWARD LEAR.

The succeeding stanzas are from recent magazine non-sense verse:

THE MISANTHROPE

I wisht I wuz a crow's egg,
I wisht I wuz a bad one.

I wisht there was a small boy a-climbin' up the tree;
I wisht he'd climb an' climb, an' madly shout he had one—
 I'd burst my shell,
 With horrid smell,
 An' cover him with me.

—G. MAYO.

BALLAD OF BEDLAM

Oh, lady, wake! the azure moon
 Is rippling in the verdant skies;
The owl is warbling his soft tune,
 Awaiting but thy snowy eyes.
The joys of future years are past,
 To-morrow's hopes have fled away;
Still let us love, and e'en at last
 We shall be happy yesterday.

The early beam of rosy night
 Drives off the ebon morn afar,
While through the murmur of the light
 The huntsman winds his mad guitar.
Then, lady, wake! my brigantine
 Pants, neighs and prances to be free;
Till the creation I am thine,
 To some rich desert fly with me.

—*Punch*.

ESKITOLOGY

A little igloo now and then
Is relished by the Eskimen.

—Nashville *Tennessean*.

A little whale oil, well frappéed,
Is relished by the Eskimaïd.

—Washington *Herald*.

A little gumdrop, this is truth,
Is relished by the Eskitooth.

—Detroit *Free Press*.

A little blubber, raw or b'iled,
Is relished by the Eskichild.

—Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.

The all of which shows just how hard
The grind is for the Eskibard.

—Buffalo *Evening News*.

But poets might detect a gap,
'Tween truth and Peary's Eskimap.

—Brooklyn *Eagle*.

And think that Peary, in straits dire,
Rejoiced to find an Eskiliar!

—Florida *Times-Union*.

A little pemmican to chaw
Is welcomed by the Eskimaw.

—Chicago *Record-Herald*.

We could keep this up all fall,
But fear 'twould make the Eskibawl.

—St. Louis *Times*.

'Tis said two gumdrops and a knife
Will buy a man an Eskiwife.

—Houston *Post*.

This sort of rhyming ought to stop—
It's hard upon the Eskipop.

—KARL VON KRAFT, in *Lippincott's*.

That unique form of stanza known as the *limerick*, was developed by Edward Lear, who himself wrote more than two hundred—of varying merit—illustrated by his own grotesque drawings, which often supplied the humor lacking in the limericks. Since then every rhymester has had his passion for limericks, and clever ones are still popular. In form, they are printed either in four lines or five—usually five; but four-line limericks contain an internal rhyme in the third line, which in the five-line limerick is divided so as to make lines three and four. Here are two examples by Lear—one of four and the other of five lines—both of which begin, as do nearly all his limericks, with "There was an old—" or "There was a young—." Naturally, variety began to grow difficult after a time, and later hymesters have been more free, and thus have done more to improve the humor of the limerick than did Mr. Lear himself.

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"

There was an Old Man in a tree,
Who was terribly bored by a bee;
When they said, "Does it buzz?"
He replied, "Yes, it does!
It's a regular brute of a Bee."

This limerick was cleverly parodied by W. S. Gilbert.
Notice that he laughingly omits the rhymes.

There was an Old Man of St. Bees,
Who was stung in the arm by a wasp.
When they asked, "Does it hurt?"
He replied, "No, it doesn't,
But I thought all the while 'twas a Hornet!"

Some limericks from current magazines are here appended:

A dentist, whose surname was Moss,
Fell in love with the charming Miss Ross;
But he held in abhorrence
Her Christian name, Florence,
So he called her his Dental Floss.

—CAROLYN WELLS.

Said the stuttering baritone Gants,
When asked by the chorister Rants
If 'twas his desire
To sing in the choir,
"I'd j-j-j-jump at the chants."

—T. C. McCONNELL.

See how the stuttering adds three syllables to the last line of the foregoing and so fills out the meter.

A Turk with a sizable harem
Said, "I love 'em and really can't spare 'em;
But they call me 'His Nibs,'
And say they're my 'ribs,'—
Though I wish they were less harum-scarum!"
—ROBERT T. HARDY.

A lachrymose lady from Sioux
Whose lover was sadly untrixious,
Refused to believe
She could not retrieve
Her lover by crying, "bioux, hioux!"
—J. B. E.

A canner, exceedingly canny,
One morning remarked to his granny:
"A canner can can anything that he can,
But a canner can't can a can, can he?"
—JAMES H. HUBBARD.

There was a tall Russian named Muski—
Wumiskiliviskivitchuski:
You may say his name twice,
If you think it sounds nice,
But I bet it will make your voice husky.
—HARRY A. ROTHROCK.

A nautical person named Hugh,
 When informed that his cap was askew,
 Cried, "Avast there! Belay!
 I wear it that way
 Because it is *picturesquel*!"

—ROBERT T. HARDY.

There was once a young person named Clare,
 Who adopted a Frenchified air.
 She drank *café noir*,
 And when told "*Au revoir*,"
 Would always reply, "*Pomme de terre!*"

—ROBERT T. HARDY.

6. Whimsical Verse

Rhymesters are constantly seeking out new forms for their ingenuity. The results are often extremely diverting. Not all the whimsical verse-forms are new, however, for some date back centuries. A few of the most interesting forms are here reproduced under two general classifications.

(a) Oddities of Conception

(1) Twists of Language

AN AUTUMNAL LOVE SONG

Dnow id th' berry Autub-timb,
 Whed stars are bridt abobe,
 I cob bedeath your widdow, dear,
 To seredade my lub.

Oh! I cad bake you sweeder sogs
 Thad ere were sug of old;
 I've god a soul all full ob lub,
 Add a head all full ob cold!

—M. M. P. K.

LOVE AS IT IS GRAMMARED

I vow I'm caught by Cupid's ruses,
 (If not by his'n, why then by whoses?)
 When on thy bosom rest red roses,
 Oh, how I wish that I were thoses;
 And when thy cheek is kissed by breezes
 'Tis then that I would fain be theses.
 E'en when I reach my last long bourne
 I'll wish my chance might be like yourn.

—J. B. E.

(2) Mnemonics

Verse of this sort carries its definition in its title—
 memory helps.

Thirty days have September,
 April, June, and November;
 All the rest have thirty-one
 Save the second month alone,
 And Leap-Year makes it twenty-nine.

—*Old Rhyme.*

(3) Mosaic or Cento Verse

The first stanza of "My Genevieve," an anonymous
 "poem," will serve as an example of a mosaic, which is
 composed of lines taken from different writers.

I only knew she came and went	<i>Powell</i>
Like troutlets in a pool;	<i>Hood</i>
She was a phantom of delight,	<i>Wordsworth</i>
And I was like a fool.	<i>Eastman.</i>

(4) Macaronic Verse

This form consists of the mingling of two or more languages. One stanza of an anonymous "poem," "Ich Bin Dein," will suffice as an example:

In tempus old a hero lived,
 Qui loved puellae deux;
 He ne pouvait pas quite to say
 Which one amabat mieux.

(5) Archaic or Dialect Verse

YE DECEITFUL BALLADIST

(*He balladeth.*)

Ye solitarie Damselle
 Laye mayking of her moane,
 Her moane laye she a-mayking
 All by herself, alone.

None other soul came thither,
 Wept she in secrecie
 All in her turret chamber,
 Where none myght hap to be.

Yea, in ye stillsome stillness
 That moansome Damselle cried,
 Nor any eye of mortal
 Her wearie woe espied.

In sighful, sadful soblets
 She moanéd her distresse,
 Ay, nurséd she her sorrowe
 In lornliest lonelinesse.

(*One butteth in.*) But naye, thou ballad baldhead,
 An thou the truth do speak,
 How knewest of the Damselle
 Lest wentest thou to peek?
 —FREDERICK MOXON.

(b) Oddities of Form

Under this heading may be grouped a wide variety of verse, all whimsical, which depends for its interest on its form quite as much as on its ingenuity of idea. There is no limit to the possible varieties, a considerable number of which follow in examples.

(1) Whimsical Shapes

A FRIEND IN NEED

This is
 that
 old
 and
 fra-
 grant
 friend
 which makes my
 life worth while!
 Sweet peace it's very
 sure to lend, till I
 find worry's at an
 end, and stretch
 back with a
 smile.

—CHARLES C. JONES.

AT YULE TIME

It's
now the
time for
Christmas trees,
mistletoe, and holly;
sleigh-bells ringing o'er
the breeze, and everybody
jolly ; the children all will eat
their fill of turkey, sauce, and
candy, and Mother will be sure to
have the paregoric handy; relatives and
friends will come to pay their annual
visit;
and
swear
by all
the
saints
above
that
everything's exquisite;
gifts to make to
every one, and
that's the very reason
I save the ones they
give to me; then give
them back next season.

—CHARLES LA TOURETTE.

(2) Typographical Oddities

THE DESCENT OF BRIGGS

Briggs went to call on Miss de Loop;

Alas, he was not fit—

For as he staggered up the stoop—

hit.

he

gait

the

is

This

The irate father of the girl

Swore softly as he lit

With both feet on poor Briggs, and—whirl!

This

st

the

gait

he

hit.

The pointed insult of it all

To Briggs (just think of it!)

Was where he landed from his fall:

(3) Acrostics

Of the several varieties of acrostics three examples are given.

Single Acrostic

Friendship, thou'rt false! I hate thy flattering smile!
 Return to me those years I spent in vain.
 In early youth the victim of thy guile,
 Each joy took wing ne'er to return again,—
 Ne'er to return; for, chilled by hopes deceived,
 Dully the slow-paced hours now move along;
 So changed the times when thoughtless I believed
 Her honeyed words, and heard her siren song.
 If e'er, as me, she lure some youth to stray,
 Perhaps, before too late, he'll listen to my lay.

—*Anonymous.*

Particular Acrostic

Though crost in our affections, still the flames
 Of Honour shall secure our noble Names
 Nor shall Our fate divorce our faith, Or cause
 The least Mislike of love's Diviner laws.
 Crosses sometimes Are cures, Now let us prove,
 That no strength Shall Abate the power of love:
 Honour, wit, beauty, Riches, wise men call
 Frail fortune's Badges, In true love lies all.
 Therefore we Yield to him, our Vows shall be
 Paid—Read, and written in Eternity:
 That All may know when men grant no Redress,
 Much love can sweeten the unhappiness S.

—THOMAS JORDAN.

Special Acrostic

A VALENTINE

Read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, and so on to the end.

—FRANCIS SARGENT OSGOOD.

For her this line is penned whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Loeda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling, lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine,—a talisman,—an amulet
That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the measure
The words, the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot,
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*,
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets, by poets,—as the name is a poet's too.
Its letters although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando,
Still form a synonym for Truth. Cease trying,
You will not read the riddle though you do the best
you *can* do.

—EDGAR ALLEN POE.

(4) Enigma

THE LETTER O

Ten fish I caught without an eye,
And nine without a tail;
Six had no head, and half of eight
I weighed upon the scale.
Now who can tell me, as I ask it,
How many fish were in my basket?

—*Anonymous.*

(5) Alliterative Conceits

Sudden swallows swiftly skimming,
Sunset's slowly spreading shade,
Silvery songsters sweetly singing,
Summer's soothing serenade. Etc.

—*Anonymous.*

(6) Letter Verse

A MAN OF LETTERS

An A.B. who was also C D,
And of money who hadn't N E,
"Said, "I'll write an S A
On the 'Age of D K,'
And I'll sell it for cash, don't U C?"

—FRANK M. BICKNELL.

(7) Geographical Whimseys

MY WIDESPREAD INDEBTEDNESS

Iowa Tenn. to my Cousin Cal.

I'll. Pa. it as soon as I Kan.

Del. Johnsing (Col.) I owe for the Wash.

And Mo. to the cook, Miss. Anne!

Ohio high do the prices fly!

And interest has Ariz.

And I can't be Ga. for the bills I must Pa.

O. La. but 'tis sad, I Wis.!

If I could find a man I could Conn.

I'd Pa. the family Md.,

But I've tried the loan agents o'er and Ore.

And I meet with a cold N. C.

O. Iowa Tenn. that I never Kan. Pa.,

And the V a. friend wants must go by;

I'll. never Mo. Pa. the Maine Mass. of my debts,

But Ala. man Kan. do is (t) R. I.!

—AUGUSTINE W. BREEDIN.

(8) Lipograms

(I the only vowel)

Idling I sit in this mild twilight dim,

Whilst birds, in wild swift vigils, circling skim.

Light wings in sighing sink, till, rising bright,

Night's Virgin Pilgrim swims in vivid light.

—*Anonymous.*

THE FATE OF NASSAN

(E is omitted)

Bold Nassan quits his caravan,
A hazy mountain grot to scan;
Climbs jaggy rocks to spy his way,
Doth tax his sight, but far doth stray.

Not work of man, nor sport of child,
Finds Nassan in that mazy wild;
Lax grow his joints, limbs toil in vain—
Poor wight! Why didst thou quit that plain!

Vainly for succor Nassan calls,
Know, Zillah, that thy Nassan falls;
But prowling wolf and fox may joy
To quarry on thy Arab boy.

—*Anonymous.*

(9) Numerical Oddities

“IN MOURNFUL NUMBERS”

One iders at the 4otide
By 1 poor youth displayed;
Whom 4tune's cruel 4ce pursued—
He 4feited a maid!

They'd met beside a 7bush;
The hour was rather 18;
His 1oder words raised many a blush;
Begly then smiled F8!

For when F8 smiles beg, beware!

'Tis 10 2 1 her plan

Is 2 call 4th those dogs of war

She 6 upon a man!

Those dogs rushed 4th—4 dog read bull—

The maiden, where was she?

With 10der care 4 her quite full

The lover climbed a tree.

He clung there with roacity;

His every nerve was 10ce;

Prepared 2 catch the maid was he,

And hold her in suspense.

Alas 4 him! The maid mistook

What his inrotions were—

As 4 the bull, his head he shook

And tossed her elsewhere!

You won't believe the $\frac{1}{2}$ 5 told,

Although you 0 2 try,

In deference to the maxim old

That figures do not lie!

—GEORGE B. MOREWOOD.

(10) Internal Rhymes

BEGINNING RHYME

Rat-tat it went upon the lion's chin;

"That hat, I know it!" cried the joyful girl;

"Summer's it is, I know him by his knock;

Comers like him (sic) are welcome as the day!

Lizzy! go down and open the street door;
Busy I am to any one but him.
Know him you must—he has been often here,
Show him upstairs, and tell him I'm alone." Etc.
—THOMAS HOOD.

MIDDLE RHYME

When I, sir, play at cricket, sick it makes me feel;
For I the wicket kick it backward with my heel.
Then, Oh! such rollers bowlers always give to me,
And the rounders, grounders, too, rise and strike my knee;
When I in anguish languish, try to force a smile,
While laughing critics round me sound me on my style.
—*Anonymous.*

(11) Prose Verse

THE PURIST

"William Henry," said the parent, and his voice was sad and stern, "I detest the slang you're using; will you never, never learn that correct use of our language is a thing to be desired? All your common bughouse phrases make the shrinking highbrow tired. There is nothing more delightful than a pure and careful speech, and the man who weighs his phrases always stacks up as a peach, while the guy who shoots his larynx in a careless slipshod way looms up as a selling-plater, people brand him for a jay. In my youth my father soaked me if I entered his shebang handing out a line of language that he recognized as slang. He would take me to the cellar, down among the

mice and rats, and with nice long sticks of stovewood he'd play solos on my slats. Thus I gained a deep devotion for our language undefiled, and it drives me nearly batty when I hear my only child springing wads of hard-boiled language such as dips and yeggmen use, and I want a reformation or I'll stroke you with my shoes. Using slang is just a habit, just a cheap and dopey trick; if you hump yourself and try to, you can shake it pretty quick. Watch my curves and imitate them, weigh your words before they're sprung, and in age you'll bless the habit that you formed when you were young."

—WALT MASON.

(12) Alphabetical

A is an Angel of blushing eighteen:

B is the Ball where the Angel was seen:

C is her Chaperon, who cheated at cards:

D is the Deux temps, with Frank of the Guards: Etc.

—C. S. CALVERLEY.

(13) Monorhymes

TO MRS. THERALE ON HER THIRTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

Oft in danger, yet alive,

We are come to thirty-five;

Long may better years arrive,

Better years than thirty-five.

Could philosophers contrive

Life to stop at thirty-five,

Time his hours should never drive

O'er the bounds of thirty-five.

High to soar, and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five;
For, howe'er we boast and strive,
Life declines from thirty-five.
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five;
And all who wisely wish to wive
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON.

(14) Chain Verse

CHAIN OF SINGLE WORDS

Nerve thy soul with doctrines noble,
Noble in the walks of time,
Time that leads to an eternal,
An eternal life sublime: Etc.

—*Anonymous.*

CHAIN OF PHRASES

The rarer seen, the less in mind,
The less in mind, the lesser pain,
The lesser pain, less grief I find,
The lesser grief, the greater gain,
The greater gain, the merrier I,
Therefore I wish thy sight to fly.

—BARNABY GOOGE.

(15) Palindrome Lines

The italicized words read the same backward as forward.
 A crazy dentist might declare, as something strange or new,
 That *Paget saw an Irish tooth, sir, in a waste gap!* True!
 Etc.

—H. CAMPKIN.

(16) Tongue Twisters

Betty bit a bit of butter,
 Bitter bit!
 But a better bit of batter
 Betty bit.

—*Anonymous.*

(17) Equivocal

PANEGRIC ON THE LADIES

Read the lines regularly or alternately—that is,—in any
 of three ways: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.; 1, 3, 5, 7, etc.; or 2, 4, 6, 8.

That man must lead a happy life
 Who's free from matrimonial chains,
 Who is directed by a wife
 Is sure to suffer for his pains.

Adam could find no solid peace
 When Eve was given for a mate;
 Until he saw a woman's face
 Adam was in a happy state. Etc.

—*Anonymous.*

(18) Echo Verses

ECHO

Asked of Echo, t'other day
 (Whose words are few and often funny),
What to a novice, she could say
 Of courtship, love and matrimony.
Quoth Echo, plain: "Matter-o'-money!"

Whom should I marry? Should it be
 A dashing damsel gay and pert,
A pattern of inconstancy;
 Or selfish, mercenary flirt?
Quoth Echo sharply: "Nary flirt!"

What if, aweary of the strife
 That long has lured the dear deceiver,
She promised to amend her life,
 And sin no more; can I believe her?
Quoth Echo, very promptly: "Leave her!"

But if some maiden with a heart
 On me should venture to bestow it,
Pray, should I act the wiser part
 To take the treasure or forego it?
Quoth Echo, with decision: "Go it!"

But what if, seemingly afraid
 To bind her fate in Hymen's fetter,
She vows she means to die a maid,
 In answer to my loving letter?
Quoth Echo, rather coolly: "Let her!"

What if, in spite of her disdain,
 I find my heart entwined about
 With Cupid's dear delicious chain
 So closely that I can't get out?
 Quoth Echo, laughingly: "Get out."

But if some maid with beauty blest,
 As pure and fair as Heaven can make her
 Will share my labor and my rest
 Till envious death shall overtake her?
 Quoth Echo (sotto voce): "Take her!"
 —JOHN GODFREY SAXE.

(19) Anagram Lines

TELEGRAM

Though but a *late germ*, with a wondrous elation,
 Yet like a *great elm* it o'ershadows each station,
Et malgré the office is still a large free mart,
 So joyous the crowd was, you'd thought it a *glee mart*,
 But they raged at no news from the nations belligerent,
 And I said, "Let 'em rage, since the air is refrigerant." Etc.
 —DR. JOHN ABERNETHY.

(20) Disclosed Anagram

BERTHA

(The italicized words are made up of the same letters.)

Lady *Bertha*, the beautiful *bather*, one day,
 After swimming and diving and splashing away,
 Found her *breath* was not equal to further display.
 So starting for cricket, she took up *her bat*.
 When the wind found a *berth* 'cross *the bar* for her hat!
 —Anonymous.

(21) Charade

DISCONSOLATE

O'er distant hills the rising moon
The evening mist dispersed,
And beaming in the radiant sky
She plainly showed *my first*.

A horseman guided by her light
Approached with headlong speed,
And as he rode, *my second* said
To urge his flagging steed.

His lady waited at the gate,
Though trysting hour was past;
She was *my whole*, because her lord
Was then *my third and last!*

—*Anonymous.*

(22) Buried Names

NAMES OF EIGHT BRITISH POETS

The sun is darting rays of gold
Upon the moor, enchanting spot,
Whose purple heights, by Ronald loved,
Up open to his shepherd cot.
And sundry denizens of air
Are flying, aye each to his nest;
And eager make at such an hour
All haste to reach the mansions blest.

—*Anonymous.*

(Gray, Moore, Byron, Pope, Dryden, Gay, Keats, and Hemans.)

(23) Irregular Lines

As a final example out of the countless varieties available, we take the "Yawp"—to adopt the expressive term used by that fertile yawper, Mr. W. J. Lampton. Miss Wells has produced a typical "Yawp" in the following:

DITHYRAMB TO AN AËROPLANE

O!

Aëroplane!

Thou product of the mighty modern brain,

Whose flight is faster than a railroad train,

To thee I sing!

For thee I set my Pegasus a-wing

And bring

A meed of praise. Although

Just how much is a meed I do not know.

But that's nor here nor there,

Aëroplane,

O!

Bird of the upper air,—

Though I admit that there

Is where

Most birds pursue their trackless way,—

I hail thy day!

W'm glad that thou hast settled down to stay,—

Well, no, I don't mean that! 'Twas said in fun,—

I mean, thy glorious day has now begun.

But tell us, wingéd one,
How is 't up there
In the high upper air?
Are the roads good? And is the scenery fair?
Is speeding fun? Or do aërial cops
Demand thy sudden stops?
I may as well admit
I'm scared a bit
At thought of new conditions brought about
By thine exalted route.

Must I
Henceforward walk with eyes upon the sky,
With head thrown back, neck strained and gaze upbent,
Fearing thy swift descent?
Or dreading lest thou chance to drop about
Some rubbish thou canst do without?
Or must I stay at home,
Fearing abroad to roam,
Lest careless chaps fling from those regions higher
Lighted cigars, and set my house on fire?

O Aëroplane,
These wonderings are vain!
So much I want to know,
Aëroplane, O!
Things thou alone canst tell—
That—well—
With thee I fain would chin;
So, if thou'rt passing by—drop in!

—CAROLYN WELLS.

EXERCISES FOR CLASS USE AND SELF-INSTRUCTION

1. Briefly discuss Horace's line, quoted on page 221.
2. Select a humorous poem of high grade and point out its humorous qualities.

3. Do the same for a witty poem.

NOTE: Exercises of this sort may be applied to other forms indefinitely.

4. Discuss "John Gilpin's Ride," by Cowper.
5. Compare the humorous verse of Oliver Herford with that of Gelett Burgess (see present day magazines).
6. Compare the humor of John Hay's poem, "Little Breeches," with that of Bret Harte's "Jim," or his "Truthful James" (sometimes called "The Heathen Chine").

7. Do the same for any other two well known poems which are generally classed as humorous.

8. Select two sets of verses which illustrate the difference (a) between ordinary parody and extravaganza; (b) burlesque and extravaganza.

9. Tell what you know from experience or observation of the quality of the "lyrics" used in musical plays today.

10. If in light verse a highly poetic line rich in imagery be introduced, will it have a tendency to help or to hurt the verse? Say why.

11. Write brief differentiating definitions of verse of the following classifications: *Vers de Société*, Satirical, Humorous, Nonsense, and Whimsical Verse.

12. Which seems to you to be the sort best worth attempting? Give reasons.

13. If *Vers de Société* appeals to you, write several verses in that style upon a theme that you think should prove attractive to the leading magazines.

14. (a) Name an example of humorous verse that appeals to you; (b) try to analyze and to capture the spirit of its humor; (c) write a stanza or two embodying a different thought but with the same humorous turn or construction.

15. Write a satirical stanza ridiculing some fashionable foible or custom that seems to you to be in bad taste.

16. Has satire often wrought reforms?

17. Write a limerick upon the subject of your desire to write a limerick.

NOTE: Unlimited imitations of whimsical forms may be taken up as additional assignments.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF METRICAL TERMS

VERSE: A line of poetry; literally, *the turn at the end of a furrow*; often loosely used for stanza; also used for poetry in general.

STANZA: A series of lines forming a typical group, or part, of a poem.

FOOT: A group of syllables consisting of accented and unaccented (or long and short, or strong and weak), syllables in various combinations, as follows:

IAMBUS: A foot of two syllables, the first unaccented, the second accented.

TROCHEE: A foot of two syllables, the first accented, the second unaccented—the reverse of the iambus.

ANAPÆST: A foot of three syllables, the first and second unaccented, the last accented.

DACTYL: A foot of three syllables, the first accented, the second and third unaccented—the reverse of the anapæst.

AMPHIBRACH: A foot of three syllables, the first unaccented, the second accented, the third unaccented—the reverse of the amphimacer.

AMPHIMACER: A foot of three syllables, the first accented, the second unaccented, the third accented.

SPONDEE: A foot consisting of two equally accented syllables; a true spondee is almost unknown in English verse.

PYRRHIC: A foot consisting of two unaccented syllables—the reverse of the spondee. This term is seldom used.¹ The spondaic foot and the pyrrhic are exceptions to our definition of the foot.

CHORIAMB: A foot of four syllables, the first and fourth accented, the second and third unaccented. This term also is seldom used.

MONOMETER: A line of verse consisting of one foot.

DIMETER A line consisting of two feet.

TRIMETER: A line consisting of three feet.

TETRAMETER: A line consisting of four feet.

PENTAMETER: A line consisting of five feet.

HEXAMETER: A line consisting of six feet.

HEPTAMETER: A line consisting of seven feet.

OCTAMETER: A line consisting of eight feet.

CATALECTIC: A catalectic line is one that drops part of the last foot; a line dropping a final syllable or syllables.

ACATALECTIC: A line which has the complete number of syllables in the last foot.

HEROIC VERSE: Iambic pentameter, or a line of five iambic feet (ten syllables).

¹Note.—Nearly all English meters may be scanned by the use of one or other of the four kinds of metrical feet first mentioned above, viz.: iambus, trochee, anapaest, or dactyl.

ELEGIAC VERSE: Alternate hexameter and pentameter lines.

ALEXANDRINE VERSE: Iambic hexameter, or a line of six iambic feet (twelve syllables).

CÆSURA: Literally *division*; the pause in the middle of a line. In classic verse it falls at the end of a word, but usually in the middle of a foot; in English verse it should fall at the end of both foot and word.

STROPHE: The first movement or section of a Greek ode; sometimes used for stanza.

ANTISTROPHE: The second movement of a Greek ode, following the strophe and identical with it in the meter.

EPODE: Literally *an after-song*; the third section of a Greek ode, differing in meter from the strophe and the antistrophe.

APPENDIX B

SOME BOOKS FOR THE FURTHER STUDY OF VERSIFICATION

A knowledge of the nature of poetry and an acquaintance with a wide range of poems are of course fundamental to an extended study of the technique of verse. A number of books on poetry, as well as representative collections of poems, are named in APPENDIX C. Those who would make a more exhaustive study of metrical forms than is afforded by this little book, will find help in the following volumes—a few among many such:

Edwin Guest's "History of English Rhythms" (1838), Second Edition, Revised by Prof. W. W. Skeat (London: Bell, 1882); and George Saintsbury's "History of English Prosody," 3 vols. (London and New York: Macmillan, 1906-1910), are exhaustive and learned works. One of the best of the smaller treatises is F. B. Gummere's "Handbook of Poetics" (Boston: Ginn, 1891). Raymond M. Alden's "English Verse" (New York: Holt, 1903) is enriched by a large number of poetic examples illustrating the whole range of versification. T. S. Omond's "English Metrists" (Tunbridge Wells: Pelton, 1903) is especially valuable for its bibliography. Special phases of prosody may also be studied in special books like the following:

"Science of English Verse," Sidney Lanier (New York: Scribner's, 1880) (lays emphasis on sound and rhythm);

"The Musical Basis of Verse," Josephine P. Dabney (London and New York: Longmans, 1901); "Essays on Blank Verse," John Addington Symonds (New York: Scribner, 1895); "Sonnets of this Century," William Sharp (London: Scott, 1886); "Hexameter Verse," P. Cummings (Cambridge, Mass: 1900); "History of Epic Poetry (post Virgilian)," John Clark (Edinburgh, 1900); "Old English Ballads," F. B. Gummere (Boston: Ginn, 1904); and many others. Dr. Gummere's work contains a valuable introduction and helpful notes. See also the standard encyclopedias for both special and general articles on versification. The "Reader's Guide," "Poole's Index to Periodical Literature," and similar cumulative reference devices, will furnish titles to all articles on the general and specific subjects desired which have appeared in periodicals for a number of years.

APPENDIX C

HELPS IN THE STUDY OF POETRY

The first requisite for the study of poetry is poetry. But in what form shall one buy or borrow it?

The complete poetic works of any one writer will be valuable chiefly to those who are instructed as to which are his best poems. Besides, to own the complete works of the many authors whose poetry should be examined means a large expenditure of money, book-space, and time for reading. To most students, therefore, collections are invaluable. Of these there are many—even many good ones. In the following greatly condensed lists, only poetry in English is considered.

1. General Collections

“A Library of the World’s Best Literature,” edited by Charles Dudley Warner and a corps of litterateurs (a subscription work, in 31 and 46 volumes), contains two well-selected volumes of “Songs, Hymns, and Lyrics,” besides extended (mostly signed) articles on, and abundant examples from, the poets of all lands. “The World’s Best Poetry” (also a subscription work, in 5 and 10 volumes), edited by Bliss Carman and others, contains a good general collection of poems classified according to themes,

together with a number of popular signed essays on poetry subjects. Edmund Clarence Stedman's "Victorian Anthology" and "American Anthology" (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1895 and 1900) form, combined, an excellent general collection of limited scope.

2. British Anthologies

Frances T. Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" (London and New York: Macmillans, 1861-1891) is a good inexpensive collection, comprising 339 poems. "The Oxford Book of English Verse," edited by A. T. Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900) is also good. Two carefully edited volumes, which together constitute the best low-priced collection of annotated British poems, are "Standard English Poems," edited by Henry S. Pancoast (New York: Holt, 1899), and "Early English Poems," edited by Henry S. Pancoast and John Duncan Spaeth (New York: Holt, 1911). The most adequate, because the most extended, British annotated anthology issued in America is "English Poems," edited by Walter C. Bronson (University of Chicago Press, 1907-1910), in four volumes (averaging over 500 pp. each), comprising: "Old English and Middle English Periods," "Elizabethan Age and Puritan Period," "Restoration and Eighteenth Century," and "Nineteenth Century." The arrangement of the profuse selections shows the rise and decline of successive schools of poetry, the several hundred pages of notes are illuminating, and the indexes, glossaries and bibliographies are very full. Three well selected volumes of British verse

have been edited with discriminating notes and biographical data by William Stanley Braithwaite. "The Book of Elizabethan Verse" (Boston: Turner & Co., 1907); "The Book of Restoration Verse" (New York: Brentano, 1909); and "The Book of Georgian Verse" (New York: Brentano, 1908).

3. American Anthologies

Dr. Bronson has issued (1912) a volume of "American Poems," on the same excellent plan as his "English Poems," and published by the same Press. Admirable as this anthology is, it must share its eminence with the "Yale Book of American Verse," edited by Thomas R. Lounsbury (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912). Both are full, varied, and represent the selections of ripe scholarship.

4. The Theory of Poetry

Aristotle's "Poetics," Sir Philip Sidney's "An Apologie for Poetics," and the three long poems by Horace, Vida, and Boileau, each entitled "The Art of Poetry," are still interesting and illuminating as examples of former-day theory. (For annotated editions of all except Aristotle, see Ginn's catalogue, Boston.) For a study of origins, see "The Evolution of Literature," A. S. MacKenzie (New York: Crowell, 1911), and "The Beginnings of Poetry," F. B. Gummere (New York and London: Macmillan, 1901). An exhaustive treatise is "The History of English Poetry," Thomas Wharton (London: Ward, Lock & Co.,

1778 et seq). "What is Poetry," Leigh Hunt, edited by Albert S. Cook (Boston: Ginn, 1893), is not only a charming essay in itself but cites largely the opinions of distinguished men of letters. Edmund Clarence Stedman's "The Nature and Elements of Poetry" (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892) is a sound, though somewhat oratorical presentment of the subject (the lectures were delivered at Johns Hopkins University). A scholarly and clear-sighted treatise is "Introduction to Poetry," Raymond M. Alden (New York: Holt, 1909). There are also in general literature many accessible essays bearing on the nature of poetry; some of the best of these are: Shelley's "Defense of Poesy;" Emerson's essays on "The Poet" and "Poetry and Imagination;" Wordsworth's introduction to the "Lyrical Ballads;" Matthew Arnold's essays "On Translating Homer," introduction to the "Poetry of Wordsworth," "Celtic Poetry," etc.; Lowell's "Essay on Dryden;" Macaulay's "Essay on Milton," etc.; and Poe's essays on "The Rationale of Verse," "The Poetic Principle," and "The Philosophy of Composition."

ADDENDUM

Among other valuable works on poetics and metrics published since the foregoing list was compiled, are: C. E. Andrews' "Writing and Reading of Verse" (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1918), Adelaide Crapsey's "Study in English Metrics" (New York: Knopf, 1918), "Foundations and Nature of Verse," C. F. Jacob (New York: Columbia University Press, 1919), E. A. G. Lamborn's "Rudiments of Criticism" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1916), and "A New Study of English Poetry," by H. J. Newbolt (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1919).

APPENDIX D

LIGHT VERSE

The fullest and most satisfactory anthologies of light verse are those edited by Carolyn Wells, beginning with "A Parody Anthology" and followed by the anthologies of "Satire," "Whimsey," "Vers de Société," and "Non-sense" (New York: Scribner, 1904, '5, '6, '7, and '10). Each volume is prefaced by an interpretive essay. A. S. Martin's "On Parody" (New York: Holt, 1896) contains not only an admirably discriminating study of the form but a choice collection of verses interspersed with the text.

APPENDIX E

MODERNISTIC VERSE

Amy Lowell's "Tendencies in Modern American Poetry" (New York: Macmillan Co., 1917) and Louis Untermeyer's "New Era in American Poetry" (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1919) discuss the new note in poetry as represented in selected American poets; while "Convention and Revolt in Poetry," by Professor Lowes (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1919), is a scholarly series of lectures on the verities in verse, new and old. The rhythms of free verse and of rhythmic prose are dealt with in "The Rhythm of Prose," W. M. Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), and by G. E. B. Saintsbury in "The History of English Prose Rhythm" (New York: Macmillan Co., 1912).

VERS LIBRE

A Chapter Added in the Second Edition

The term *Vers Libre* comes to us, as so many poetic fashions have come, from France, but while the old French meters owed their beauty to their intricate form, this new style seems formless. It has been taken up with enthusiasm, and hundreds of people in England and America are now writing poems in unrhymed lines of unequal length. That seems an easy thing to do, but if we take a piece of prose and chop it into short lines, we do not make *vers libre*. Yet that we do is the common conception of the movement and its product, and some revered critics hold to the same opinion.

Blank verse has a metrical pattern; *vers libre* has none. "Shakespeare," says John Dryden, "was the first, who to shun the pains of continuall Rhyming invented that kind of writing, which we call blanck Verse." We smile to-day at Dryden's criticism. We know that Shakespeare used a form more free than rhyme because he found it more suited to express intense and varied thought, and not in order to avoid "pains" of "continuall Rhyming." So to-day we must not hastily conclude that lack of rhyme is a sign of laziness. There are no doubt many people who have greater emotional and artistic impulse than they have power of expression, and it is natural for them to welcome an apparently easy road to their goal, but there are other

sincere and talented artists who use this method deliberately. Why do they choose it? What are some of the reasons for the revolt against rhyme and metrical form, and what are the laws, if any, underlying the new freedom?

The reasons for the revolt were the desire to avoid the hackneyed and the trite, to gain new freedom of movement, to prune unnecessary exuberances, and to abolish the use of ready-made similes and phrases which had been minted so often that their values were debased.

The first ornament that went overboard was meter. "A set metrical form," the poet argued, "imposes a rigidity of thought." He would none of it.

The next ornament that went to the discard was rhyme. Although *vers libre* in France is often rhymed, English and American writers of free verse have seldom rhymed their lines, not perhaps from dislike of rhyme in itself, but because the use of it involved the use of inevitable words which the poet might not wish to use. If, for instance, he wrote "love", he almost certainly had to pair it with "dove" or "above". If he indited a poem to "her," he usually had to end it with "stir," which was awkward and commonplace. The smoother his verses, the more reminiscent they seemed. All English rhymed poems sounded to him like echoes of things which had been written a thousand times before. They left him impatient and dissatisfied.

Having cast aside rhyme and meter, what element of poetical beauty was left to him? The fundamental element of all poetry, the element which he could not discard—*rhythm*.

Rhythm is measured movement, a regular succession of time-intervals; but *vers libre* demands freedom and variety of movement, and it therefore calls to its aid *Cadence*, which is the natural fall of the voice in reading or speaking, as at the end of a sentence. A man in anger or pain takes short breaths. He cries out in sharp, short sentences. The intenser his emotion, the shorter is his expression of them. So in *vers libre* the *wave-length of emotion* governs the length of the line. It follows that each poet makes his own pattern, and each thought imposes its own cadence, for the writer of *vers libre* uses no unnecessary words to fill out his line to an arbitrary length.

"A poem comes out of the vibrations of the soul," says Mr. Edgar Lee Masters. The effort of the writer of free verse is to express those vibrations strongly and clearly, and if he succeed, our souls vibrate in response, for "Art" says Tolstoi, "is the transfer of emotion."

Half an hour;
How long is that?
There is a chasm
Deep as all the centuries between us.
For half an hour ago
You were alive.

—M. E. R.

Vers libre therefore is individual and naturalistic; it attempts to essentialize, to vitalize, and to express the spirit of a thing. It aims at economy of words, austerity of meaning, and flexibility of movement. The majority of

the writers of successful *vers libre* have first served an apprenticeship to the bondage of meter and rhyme.

Mr. Edgar Lee Masters, whom we have quoted, has given us in his "Spoon River Anthology," 214 specimens of *vers libre*, the confessions of the dead in a country churchyard, each a short study in psychology, ironic and sometimes brutal, and each with a jolt in the climax. Here are some lines from

WALTER SIMMONS

My parents thought that I would be
As great as Edison or greater,
For as a boy I made balloons
And wondrous kites and toys with clocks
And little engines with tracks to run on
And telephones of cans and thread.

* * * * *

But then at twenty-one I married
And had to live, and so, to live
I learned the trade of making watches
And kept the jewelry store on the square,
Thinking, thinking, thinking, thinking,—
Not of business, but of the engine
I studied the calculus to build,
And all Spoon River watched and waited
To see it work, but it never worked.
And a few kind souls believed my genius
Was somehow hampered by the store.
It wasn't true. The truth was this:
I didn't have the brains.

Naturally, a style which easily degenerates into the fantastic, is meat for the parodist, but to write good parody one must know the rules of the game.

Many of Mr. Masters' lines are intensely prosaic, and now and then ridiculous, but others are exquisite, and still others lofty, as this fine passage from "Julian Scott:"

The dust's for crawling, heaven's for flying.
Wherefore, O Soul, whose wings are grown,
Soar upward to the sun!

And note the high poetic quality of these lines:

O maternal earth which rocks the fallen leaf to sleep!

—*Washington McNeely*

Such phantom blossoms palely shining
Over the lifeless boughs of Time.

—*Russell Kincaid*

But here by the mill the castled clouds
Mocked themselves in the dizzy water.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

So swiftly, it seemed to be at rest
Under cities of cloud and under
Spheres of silver and changing worlds—
Until I saw a flash.

—*Isaiah Beethoven*

Miss Amy Lowell, who has written successful sonnets

and also much free verse, has made sympathetic studies of the work of modern French poets, especially Paul Fort, and as a derivative, has evolved the experiment of "*polyphonic prose*." We quote from her

RED SLIPPERS

Red slippers in a shop-window; and outside in the street,
flaws of gray, windy sleet!

.....
They balance upon arched insteps like springing bridges
of crimson lacquer; They swing up over curved heels like
whirling tanagers sucked in a wind-pocket; they flatten
out, heelless, like July ponds, flared and burnished by red
rockets.

.....
.....
The flaws of gray, windy sleet beat on the shop-window
where there are only red slippers.

IMAGISME. "An Image," says Ezra Pound, "is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." The "Imagistes" aim at clarity, brevity, precision, delicacy, and direct treatment of the subject. They avoid inversions and unnecessary adjectives.

The trees, like great jade elephants
Chained, stamp and shake neath the gadflies of the breeze:
The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:
The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies,
The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah,
Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

—JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

An "Imagiste" poem, to be a good one, should describe exactly, but it should also suggest a mental image beyond the thing described.

HOKKU

When I saw the fallen flower return to the branch—
lo! it was only a butterfly.

—FROM THE JAPANESE.

The foregoing translation makes no attempt to reproduce the meter of the original, for the "Hokku" is a set metrical form.

So far, in this chapter, we have considered only poems which treat of a single emotion or a single impression, but the new impulse in verse-writing has given us poets who use a large canvas for their vigorous pictures of contemporary life. Three seem to us particularly noteworthy—strong, modern, sincere and individual: Mr. Robert Frost, who in "North of Boston" uses a method which we might call perhaps "free blank verse"; Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson, who with a polished method in blank verse and in rhyme, gives us trenchant character studies; and Mr. Vachel Lindsay. Mr. Lindsay's poems, "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," "The Fireman's Ball," and "The Santa Fé Trail," march with a tremendous rhythmic pace. They are written in free, *rhymed* verse. Their author calls them "poems to be chanted," and by a conscious return to what has been called "the primitive singing of poetry," he gets an emotional swing and effect which are always the result of

powerful rhythm. Mr. Lindsay is intensely American. There is nothing effete or reminiscent about him. If any of these apostles of a new art can voice the soul of the real America, vigorous, rough, humorous, and idealistic, we think it is he. Study the qualities in the following lines from *The Santa Fé Trail*:

Cars in a plain realistic row—
 And fair dreams fade, when the raw horns blow.
 On each snapping pennant
 A big black name—
 The careering city
 Whence each car came
 They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah,
 Tallahassee and Texarkana.

* * * * *

Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston,
 Cars from Topeka, Emporia, and Austin;

* * * * *

Ho for Kansas, land that restores us
 When houses choke us, and great books bore us!
 While I watch the highroad
 And look at the sky,
 While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur
 Roll their legions without rain
 Over the blistering Kansas plain—
 While I sit by the milestone
 And watch the sky,
 The United States
 Goes by!

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